NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, *238 William St., N. Y.*

No. 349. *Price, Five Cents.*

NICK CARTER ON HIS METTLE

OR

THE TRAPPING OF COOL KATE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"

A YOUNG MAN SEIZED WINONAH'S HAND, AND AT THE SAME INSTANT NICK CARTER RECEIVED A BLOW ON THE HEAD THAT KNOCKED HIM SENSELESS.

Mon. Jan. 7. 1918.

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No. 349. NEW YORK, September 5, 1903. Price Five Cents.

NICK CARTER ON HIS METTLE;

OR,

The Trapping of Cool Kate.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

CHICK HAS AN ADVENTURE.

The Washington and New York Flyer, leaving Philadelphia late in the afternoon, was spinning over the steel rails at a great clip, New Yorkwards.

Just as the train whistled for the Germantown Junction, a keen-looking young chap threw aside the half-smoked end of a Colorado Maduro and walked leisurely through the train to the rear parlor car.

He was a young man, good-looking and of good figure, and his build went to indicate that he was both strong and supple.

He had a clear-cut face, and his clothes had the trim cut of the active man of business. Just what his business was could not be guessed.

He had previously occupied a seat in the parlor car, and had gone forward to the smoking compartment to enjoy a cigar, leaving his bags on the seat.

On his return he found his things on the floor and a woman occupying his place.

She was pretty, alone, and there was room for one more beside her.

The young fellow paused in front of her and looked a trifle dubiously at his bags on the floor.

"The conductor removed your traps, sir," said the lady, in a soft, musical voice, "despite my protest."

"Oh, that's all right," was the cheery response; "I'll not complain if I may be allowed to share the seat with you, madam."

"That is your right, sir."

The young man sat down and did not seem at all inclined to let the conversation fall through.

He regarded the lady by his side furtively.

She was clad wholly in black. A heavy veil shaded her features.

Despite this, he could see that she was both young and pretty.

Exchanges of commonplaces eventually led to confidences, and the lady finally asked:

"And won't you tell me your name?"

"Certainly. It is Chickering Carter."

The veiled lady gave an almost perceptible start.

The name of Chick Carter was known with that of Nick, his great chief, and Patsy, the invincible detective trio, from one end of the country to the other.

In addition to being a very handsome chap, Chick was just at the impressionable age when a pretty face never failed to attract.

He was returning from Washington where he had been on a matter of private business, which had resulted most lucratively for him.

"I've been almost dying to know your name," said the young woman, alongside, "mine is Winonah Andrews. I live in Philadelphia, and I'm going to New York."

"That is most fortunate for me, Miss Andrews——"

"Mrs. Andrews, please."

"Then you are——"

"A widow. Yes."

"I might have guessed it."

"And how?"

"It is proverbial that widows are the most charming of creatures."

"No flattery, please, or I shall have to chide you."

"And are you going to New York for pleasure?"

"Far from it. I am going for the body of my dead brother."

The young widow hid her face in a dainty handkerchief for a moment.

Then she told the young detective her story.

She had been a cloak model in a Philadelphia store. Her husband had died a year before leaving her without means. She had a younger brother in New York, Charlie Norton, by name. He had been the private secretary of one Alfred Dorriter of East Eighth Street. He had died at this man's house. His life was insured for a thousand dollars, in Winonah's favor, and she had been notified to come and claim his body.

Chick found the lady most agreeable, and the time passed pleasantly until the train reached Jersey City.

If the young detective had paused to think about it it might have struck him that the lady was rather cheerful under the circumstances.

But he didn't think about it.

He was enjoying the present. That was enough.

As the express train steamed into the station in Jersey City, Chick arose and stepped into the aisle to let the lady pass out.

Then he stooped to gather up his luggage.

As he did so his eye caught sight of a red piece of paper on the car floor.

Mechanically and through force of habit he picked it up and put it in his pocket.

Then he turned to his companion.

His amazement was great to find her gone.

He hurried to the platform thinking to find her waiting there.

No one resembling her was in sight.

"Did you see a lady leave the car?" said he, addressing the porter at the step and describing his traveling companion.

"No, sah, nobody like dat got off here."

"Well, by Jove," ejaculated Chick, "that's where I got the cold shake."

Not a little piqued, he started for the exit gates, when the bulging of his coat on the left side caused him to stop suddenly in his tracks.

There was a long slit in the left side of the garment through the lining, exposing his waistcoat.

His wallet, which had been in this pocket and in which was a crisp five-hundred-dollar bill, was missing.

"Well, I'll just be hanged," said Chick, kicking himself heartily in the shins, "taken in like a Jersey comeon. Well this is rich. Won't Nick laugh. And Patsy will have a fit."

Alternately smiling and swearing, the susceptible young detective hurried to Nick's house to tell him of his adventure.

CHAPTER II.

CHICK HEARS OF COOL KATE.

Nick Carter, the famous detective, sat in his study reading in the red-headed extras the details of a clever scheme whereby one of the large insurance companies had recently been swindled of a large sum by the substitution of a body for one of the persons insured by them.

The officers of the insurance company has just telephoned him to take charge of the case and ferret out the organized gang of swindlers.

Nick was thinking he had a good-sized job on his hands, when the door was unceremoniously thrown open and Chick strode in.

He threw his hat viciously in a corner and himself into a deep leather chair.

"I'm a simple minded idiot," he observed.

"What's the trouble, my boy?" asked Nick.

Chick related the story of his adventure to his chief.

The great detective listened without cracking a smile, though there was an amused twinkle in his eyes.

"I'm an ass," concluded the young fellow, emphatically.

A roar of uncontrollable laughter, coming from the direction of a couch in the corner, greeted this statement.

Chick arose with malice in his eyes and hurled a heavy volume of newspaper jokes at the couch.

It just missed the convulsed form of Patsy, who was writhing in glee.

"What a guy," he gasped: "you ought to be a precinct detective. You are clever enough to be head of the New York detective bereau. Oh, my; oh, my."

Chick went over and solemnly sat on Patsy's head.

"Describe the woman," said Nick, briefly.

Chick gave a minute description of the fair pickpocket.

"Cool Kate," said Nick, calmly.

"What!" cried Chick, jumping to his feet; "the queen of crooks?"

"No other."

"Well, here's where I camp on her trail."

"Good. I suspect that she and one Dorriter, an Italian, whose real name is Sparetti, are the head of an exceptionally clever gang of insurance swindlers. They have been operating successfully in Chicago and the West. Now they've struck New York. Several of the big companies have been hit for good amounts by the substitution of bodies. There's a chance for revenge for you. We've been retained to run down this gang. There is lots of gain and glory in it for us."

Chick looked more cheerful. He whistled, always a sign of rising spirits with him, and thrust his hands into his pocket.

The right hand struck a piece of paper.

He drew it out.

"By Jiminy, this may be a clew," he shouted, holding up the red pawn ticket he had picked from the car floor.

It bore the printed name of Levi Einvitz, Bowery, and showed that a pair of ear rings had been pledged for twenty-five dollars by Anita Kaysler.

On the back were penciled two addresses:

"Winonah Andrews, 187 Wilston Street, Philadelphia," and "Adolph Dorriter, 986 East Eighth Street, New York."

Then there had been some truth in the young woman's story. Here were the same addresses she had given, at any rate.

It seemed that there was a Winonah Andrews, then.

"We'll soon see," said Nick. "Patsy, get over to Philadelphia on the early train and look up Miss Winonah Andrews. Chick, I'll go and see old Einvitz. We must pinch this insurance gang quick. I believe you have a valuable clew in that pawn ticket. You go to bed and I'll tell you in the morning what I have discovered."

Nick hurried over to the Bowery. It was early evening and that thoroughfare was crowded with the usual East Side crowd.

Einvitz was well known to Nick. He strongly suspected that the old Shylock was a "fence"—a receiver of goods stolen by the thieves of the Cherry Hill district and the Italian thugs of Mulberry Bend.

He stood behind the counter as Nick entered.

"Vell, vhat do you vant to hock, eh?" he asked, sharply.

"Nothing," said Nick, cripsly. "I want a description of the woman who pawned these ear rings."

He laid the pawn ticket in front of the spectacled old man.

The pawnbroker picked it up carelessly, then broke out, excitedly:

"Vhere did you get this? Oh, my, my. I would gif ein dollar to know where you got this."

"Keep your dollar, uncle. I came by it honestly. Now tell me about the woman to whom you gave it."

The pawnbroker looked over at Nick's shoes.

They were not the square-toed sort of the police.

"Are you a tout or a detective?" said he, suspiciously.

"I am Nick Carter."

"Ach, Himmel," exclaimed the Jew, bowing and rubbing his hands; "the great Nick Carter. Certainly, certainly, I vill tell you anythings."

"Describe the woman."

"She is Cool Kate, the queen of crooks."

"I thought so."

"She has taken in about all the fly cops on the force. Her disguises are numerous. A week ago she robbed my shop of several diamond-studded watches."

Einvitz spoke now without accent. He was a native of America.

"How did she get away with your stuff?" asked Nick.

"Hypnotized my nephew, Solomon, the young man

you passed as you came in. He was in the shop alone. She put up the earrings, and while Solomon was engrossed with her and her infernally pretty face, she scooped in the tickers. Solomon had met her in the Tenderloin before. She passed under the name of Hannah Hurdle then."

"You suspect that Solomon might have had a hand in the matter."

"I have my suspicions. I've told him that until he recovers the watches he is out of the business and my will. He pretends to be on her track now."

"Well, I may help him. I thank you for the information."

Nick then returned to his home and turned in.

CHAPTER III.

CHICK ON CHERRY HILL.

Bright and early the next day he called Chick into conference and told him of his talk with the pawnbroker.

"You look up Adolph Dorriter," said he, "and I'll scout around Mulberry Street and see what I can find out about this gang of insurance crooks."

"Where will I meet you?" asked Chick.

"Here, to-night. Patsy will be back from Philadelphia then."

Chick started.

The name the young woman had given as that of her brother was Charles Norton.

Chick rode over to the East Eighth Street address of his alleged employer.

The number was a Raines Law hotel.

There wasn't any appearance of wealth about the place. It looked little like the residence of a man who could afford a private secretary.

A red-faced Irishman stood behind the bar.

Chick took a glass of soda and asked the barkeeper to drink.

"Know a man named Dorriter?" asked Chick.

"Yep. Watcher want with that bum?"

"Is he a bum?"

"Nothin' else."

"Where is he now?"

"Dunno. Cherry Hill, like as not."

"Ever hear he had a 'secretary?"

"Nit. Maybe it's Dick you mean. Young feller allers with him."

"Whereabouts in Cherry Hill does he hang out?"

"Vatsky's, in Oliver Street."

Chick started for Cherry Hill.

Vatsky's was one of the lowest dives in one of the toughest parts of the city.

He altered his appearance as he went along, and some minutes later dropped into a seat alongside several other members of one of the "gangs" of the Hill and seemed to be one of the bunch.

"I'm flush, fellers. I'll buy," he said.

The loungers crowded around and drank at his expense gladly.

Chick surreptitiously disposed of his liquor.

He got into conversation with the fellows, and finally asked:

"Where's Dolph and Dick?"

"Dick's doin' a bit on the Island."

"What for?"

"Tryin' to hold up a bank messenger. Caught. Six months."

Chick had learned what he wished to know.

Pretending to be drunk, he arose to his feet and stood unsteadily.

He started out, but the young toughs, who thought he had money in his pockets, surrounded him and began jostling him.

He resisted in a half-stupefied way, all the time shouldering his way to the door.

The crowd pushed closer, and one raised a blackjack over another's shoulder and struck at Chick.

Chick saw the blow coming and dodged.

Then he struck out right and left.

The hoodlums went down like ten pins before his well-directed blows.

Jumping to the door, he sped around the corner, throwing off his disguise as he ran.

When he reached Chatham Square he had completely changed his appearance.

He went directly home. Patsy, having returned from Philadelphia, was awaiting him. Nick was not in.

"What luck, Patsy?" inquired Chick.

"I found the Andrews girl's place. She started for New York some days since."

"Good. That Cool Kate has got her in her clutches, I'll bet. Tell me about your discoveries."

"I saw her landlady at the Philadelphia place. She told me that the Andrews girl had lived with her since her husband died, that she had one brother, Charlie Norton, in New York, secretary to a Mr. Dor-

riter, and that several days ago Dorriter telegraphed her that Charlie was dead and for her to come on and claim the body. She started the same day."

"Then Cool Kate was at the bottom of the plot. Did you get a description of the girl?"

"Yes. Dark eyes, dark hair, full lips."

Patsy continued and gave a minute description of Winonah Andrews.

"In many points that description fits Cool Kate. They must look a great deal alike. I guess that they are going to put the boy and girl out of the way and collect Norton's insurance. How much did the landlady say he was insured for?"

"A thousand."

"I'll bet it's more than that. His sister Winonah just doesn't know. I'm going over to the Island and find out. I think Charlie Norton is there."

"Well, I'll stay here till Nick comes," said Patsy.

Chick went immediately to Blackwell's Island.

He knew the warden of the prison well and had no difficulty in gaining admission. He described the prisoner who had been sent up for attempting to rob the bank messenger, and the warden took him at once to this prisoner's cell. He was sitting on his cot as Chick approached.

"Hello, Charlie," the detective called out.

The boy, for he was only about nineteen, jumped to his feet.

He had a weak but not altogether bad face.

"Who the deuce are you?" he demanded.

"A friend of your sister."

"Of Winonah's?" exclaimed the prisoner.

Then he bit his lip. The detective had cleverly trapped him into betraying his identity.

Chick made himself known, and after a while induced the boy to talk freely. He seemed somewhat in awe of Chick, as that young gentleman was well known by reputation in the world of graft.

"Are you expecting your sister to come to see you?" asked Chick.

"Gracious, no. I wouldn't have her know I'm in the pen for the world. You won't tell her?"

"She thinks you're dead."

"Because I haven't written?"

"Why didn't you write?"

"Busy—busy at the kind of work that has landed me here."

"You like this better than being secretary to a rich man?"

"That be hanged. Dorriter isn't rich."

"Then you have been writing lies to your sister?"

"Yes. I was ashamed to tell the truth. I didn't want to have her work for us both. I had no job for a long time."

Chick felt sorry for the lad.

He had known of many a boy who had drifted into such a life in order to keep body and soul together.

"You thought you had a good job with Dorriter?"

"Yes, I answered an ad. for the job. He is a rascal—a Fagan. He wants to make a crook of me."

"How has he escaped arrest?"

"He is the head of a regularly organized gang. He doesn't work himself."

"Has no one ever squealed on him?"

"It means death to squeal."

"You are doing it."

"Well, I'll take the risk. I'm tired of the life. And he didn't stand by me in this job. I never heard of one of his men getting nabbed before."

"Protected, eh?"

"Yes. I don't see how he failed me."

Chick thought he saw.

It struck him as a scheme to get the young fellow out of the way for a while.

"Let's see. You had your life insured, didn't you?" he asked.

"Yes, for six thousand dollars."

This was five thousand more than his sister knew about.

"For your sister?"

"Yes. Dorriter suggested it. Helped me to pay the premiums."

"That was kind of him. Now he is going to take his pay."

"How's that?"

"He is going to collect your life insurance."

"But I'm not dead."

"He has so reported you. Your sister has been sent for to take your body back."

"The deuce you say."

Charlie Norton was greatly surprised.

"How can he get the money, though?" he asked.

"Do you know Cool Kate, the queen of crooks?"

"You bet. She is Dorriter's chief adviser—really the head of the gang."

"Does she look anything like your sister?"

"A little."

"Enough to pass for her?"

"Yes. By Jove, that's their scheme, sure."

"I think so. Your sister is somewhere in New York, in the hands of this gang, probably. I have been unable to locate her yet."

"Have you looked up Dorriter's house?"

"In Eighth Street, in the saloon?"

"No. At his swell residence."

"Where is that?"

Charlie gave a Murray Hill address that caused Chick to start with surprise. He didn't suspect that Dorriter lived a Jekyll and Hyde life.

"Does he live at the Murray Hill place?"

"Yes, when he isn't somewhere else in disguise."

"Then he is in disguise at the saloon?"

"Yes."

"He is bigger game than I thought. And where does Cool Kate live?"

"In West Ninety-second Street."

Chick was well satisfied with the result of his talk with young Norton.

Cheering him with promises to effect his release if possible, he went away.

Hurrying back home, he found Nick and Patsy there, and the three famous detectives went into consultation about the developments in the case of Dorriter and Cool Kate.

CHAPTER IV.

NICK TAKES A HAND.

"Well, I guess I'll call on Dorriter at his swell place," said Nick, after he had heard Chick's story. "You go to Cool Kate's address, Chick. The real Winonah Andrews is doubtless a prisoner at one place or the other. Patsy, you skirmish around outside Kate's and cover Chick's retreat if he finds the girl and tries to get her away."

Then Nick, the careful general, mapped out his plan of action.

Half an hour later he was pushing the electric button at a pretentious brownstone mansion in the fashionable Murray Hill district.

A manservant of ebony hue, tall and powerful, answered his ring.

Nick had assumed a disguise as he rode toward Dorriter's house.

Now he wore English mutton chop whiskers and spoke with a strong cockney accent.

He asked for Dorriter and handed the servant a card with the name of Peter Pearson thereon.

He was shown into a richly-furnished reception-room.

Dorriter entered in a few seconds.

He was a medium-sized, well-built man of middle age, with keen black eyes and an unscrupulous expression about his face.

"You wish to see me?" he asked.

"If you are Mr. Dorriter."

"I am he."

"My name is Peter Pearson. I come from Philadelphia. I am a friend of Mrs. Andrews. May I see her?"

Dorriter's start of surprise was almost imperceptible. Yet Nick observed it."

"You knew she was here—how, may I ask?"

"I am a friend of Mrs. Witmere, her Philadelphia landlady."

"And may I ask how she knew my address?"

This was a poser.

Nick thought fast. He saw he had an exceptionally shrewd crook to deal with.

"I really can't say as to that," he replied, readily. "Mrs. Andrews may have written or wired."

"Ah, yes, perhaps so," said Dorriter.

Nick saw he was suspicious.

"Mrs. Andrews' brother's body is here with you, I believe."

"Oh, yes," motioning toward the rear.

"May I see Mrs. Andrews a moment?"

"Certainly."

Dorriter summoned a servant and bade him request Mrs. Andrews to come downstairs.

The sound of steps on the stairs was heard almost immediately, and a woman swept into the room.

She was tall and modishly gowned.

She was not altogether handsome, a hard look about the eyes detracting from her appearance.

Nick recognized her immediately from Chick's description, as his traveling companion—the woman who had so skillfully stolen his five hundred.

He recognized her also as Cool Kate, the queen of crooks.

Dorriter introduced her.

She gazed keenly at Nick.

Still the detective trusted to his disguise to protect his identity.

His face was well known to every desperate lawbreaker in New York.

"Mrs. Witmere asked me to call and offer my services to you in your misfortune," said Nick.

"That was very kind of her, but Mr. Dorriter has done everything that could be done. He was so kind to my brother."

Mrs. Andrews applied a dainty handkerchief to her eyes.

"May I take a last look at your brother?" asked Nick.

He wished to see how much the substituted body resembled the real Charlie Norton.

"Certainly," said Dorriter; "this way."

He parted the heavy portières and led the way into a dimly-lighted room. Cool Kate stayed behind.

In the center was a coffin, at the head of which some tapers were burning dimly.

Dorriter turned back the lid of the coffin.

Nick, unhesitating, stepped up and gazed at the white face in the coffin.

It was that of a young man somewhat resembling Chick's description of the real Charlie Norton. Enough to deceive the insurance company.

"Poor chap," said Nick, sympathetically. "What did he die of?"

"Heart failure," said Dorriter.

Nick turned to take his leave. He guessed that Winonah must be at Cool Kate's house.

"I will be in New York a few days," said he to the pseudo Mrs. Andrews, as he passed out; "let me know if there is anything I can do for you."

"I will, sir," she said.

Nick was let out the front door by the black manservant.

As soon as the door closed on him, Cool Kate rushed to the window and watched his retreating figure. Then she turned to Dorriter.

"Do you know who that man was?" she said, fiercely.

"Some spotter for the insurance company, probably."

"It was Nick Carter."

Dorriter jumped to his feet as if he had been struck. His face paled.

"What? Nick Carter!" he cried; "then the jig is up. How do you know it was Nick Carter?"

"I'd know his eyes anywhere. He can't disguise them."

Suddenly Cool Kate gave a little gasp and thrust her hand into a pocket of her dress.

She drew out Chick's card.

"Chickering Carter," she read. "By all the gods, that easy guy was Chick Carter, Nick's side partner. Well, this is rum."

She laughed.

"You've played your game once too often, Kate."

"What game?"

"Your helpless-widow-on-the-railroad racket. The Carters have camped on your trail, and when they get stretched out all hell can't stop them."

Cool Kate looked glum.

"I've always managed to keep out of their path till now," she said. "Well, it will be nip and tuck. There is only one thing to be done if we are going to pull these insurance games off. Nick Carter is probably on to that, too. I was tipped that a big gun was to be put on the insurance swindles. We must put them out of business."

"There are three of them—Nick, Chick and Patsy."

"The cleverest combination in New York."

"How are we going to put them out of the way?"

Cool Kate pondered a moment.

"Leave that to me," said she. "Come over to my house now and let's keep our eye on that Andrews girl, or the Carters will have her out of the house before we know it."

CHAPTER V.

CHICK MEETS SOLOMON.

Chick went directly to the address young Charlie Norton had given him. Some hours after Nick started for Dorriter's.

As he neared his destination he saw a young Jew coming away from the very house he was heading for.

Chick guessed immediately, from the description Nick had given him of Solomon Einvitz, the old pawnbroker's nephew, that this was he.

He recalled old Einvitz' suspicions that his nephew knew something about how Cool Kate, under the name of Hannah Hurdle, had gotten away with his watches.

He stopped in front of the young fellow.

"Didn't find her at home, eh, Solomon?" said he.

"Who the deuce do you mean?" was the startled reply.

"I mean Hannah Hurdle."

The young Jew stared hard at him.

"And who may you be?" he inquired.

"A friend of your uncle."

Solomon turned pale. He looked nervous.

"Then it is plain you are no friend of mine, and I don't want to have anything to do with you," he said. He tried to walk on.

"Don't be in too great a rush. What makes you think I am no friend of yours?"

Chick had stepped in the way while speaking.

"You are a detective."

"Right."

"That's enough. I thought it would come to that."

"Come to what?"

"You know what happened in uncle's shop?"

"Yes."

"I suppose uncle has taken it into his head to have me shadowed. He is mean enough to suspect that I took his watches."

"I don't believe you did."

"Do you mean that?"

"Certainly."

"Well, that's different."

"And you don't want to think too hard of your uncle."

"Why?"

"He really thinks you innocent, but he wishes to get at the bottom of the matter."

"Well, I am not guilty. If I had wanted to steal I would have taken a few diamonds."

"That's what I thought about it."

The young Jew looked relieved.

"Now what were you doing at that house?" asked Chick.

"I wanted to try and redeem the watches—buy them from her."

"What for?"

"Well, I liked the girl, even if she did fool me. I wanted to let her off easy."

"What good would that do you?"

"I would pay her for the watches and she would give me a writing to the effect that I had nothing to do with taking them, or I would bring uncle to hear her say so if she didn't want to write it."

Chick stared at the young Jew in amazement.

He marveled at the perfect stupidity of the young fellow.

"You must be a little doppy," said Chick.

"Why?"

"To think she would confess the theft and give you the chance to nab her, if you wanted to. She wouldn't believe your good intentions. And your uncle wouldn't look at it that way, either."

For a few moments the young Jew looked silly.

"I never thought of it that way," he said. "I certainly meant to play fair with her."

"She would have laughed at you."

"I thought I stood well with her."

"How much have you spent on her to date?"

"About a hundred."

"That's a hundred too much. She'd let you spend as much more."

"You don't know her as well as I do."

"I venture to say I know her a great deal better."

"She would be willing to marry me."

"And you'd be fool enough to fall into such a trap if some one didn't pull you out."

"Do you mean to insult me?"

"Not for the world. This woman is on the make. As long as she could pull your leg you'd be 'it' with her. When you quit spending, the back bench for yours."

"I don't believe it."

"I'll convince you when I bag the lady."

"And you want my help?"

"You must help if your help is needed. A word from me would change your uncle's opinion of you."

"You would not be mean enough for that?"

"It won't be necessary. You're going to help."

"I'll do whatever you say."

"I thought you would. You believe she took the watches, don't you? Of course you do, or you wouldn't have come here after them."

"Yes, she took them. No one else had a chance."

"That isn't proof. Now I think I know where she is."

"Where?"

"Do you know a man named Dorriter?"

"Never heard of him."

"She passes as his wife."

"Then she lied to me."

"She can lie faster than a horse can trot."

"She said she was single and that her father wanted to make her marry a man she despised."

"That's a fair sample of her fiction. Now I'm going in this house. There's a girl there, I think, a prisoner. Hannah is passing herself off as this girl just now."

The young Jew looked very sick at the revelations of the wickedness of his charmer.

"Now I want you to stand in front here and whistle loudly if anybody comes up the steps," continued Chick. He wished to keep the young Jew near so

that in case he had not found the right place he could make Solomon take him to Hannah Hurdle's real place of abode.

Running lightly up the steps, he pulled the bell handle vigorously.

He had struck the right place, all right, as he was destined to find out shortly.

CHAPTER VI.

CHICK TAKES A TRICK.

A stout woman with a square jaw answered Chick's ring. She was evidently an Italian, though she spoke good English.

"Does Hannah Hurdle live here?" asked Chick.

"Yes, sir."

"Is she in?"

"No."

"Where is she?"

"Dunno."

"When will she be in?"

"Can't say."

"No matter. I wish to see the young woman occupying her room."

Chick saw that he had scored a bull's-eye.

The woman's eyes showed her surprise, though her face remained immobile.

"There's no young woman in her room."

"That's queer. I was sent here to see the girl."

"Who sent you?"

"Hannah herself."

"Why did you ask for her then?"

"To see if I had struck the right place."

"Hadn't you the number?"

"I wasn't sure of it."

"Well, give the sign."

"Ah, gwan."

"You're a fake. Get out."

The woman tried to shut the door.

"Hold on," said Chick, putting his foot against the door. "I must see the girl."

The woman's eyes glittered savagely.

She opened the door slightly.

"Well, what do you want to say to her?"

"I'll tell her only. Ask if I can see her."

"All right." The woman held the door open, Chick stepped in, and the woman went upstairs.

She was gone some time.

"She will see you," she said, when she finally reappeared. "Walk right up."

"After you," said Chick, politely.

He followed the woman up three flights.

"This door," said the woman, pushing open a heavy oak door, "go in."

"After you, thanks," said Chick.

The woman entered and Chick followed.

As he stepped across the threshold he felt the muzzle of a revolver pressed behind his ear and the woman in front turned suddenly and presented another pistol straight at his head.

"Throw up your hands," said a woman's voice at his elbow.

Complying, Chick turned his head and met the eyes of Cool Kate.

Chick trusted to his disguise to prevent her recognizing him as her parlor-car victim.

To-day he wore a red wig.

"This is indeed a warm reception, ladies," said the young detective, coolly.

He realized that he was in the hands of a desperate woman.

His only resource was his tongue.

"If you have any regard for your health, you will keep your hands elevated," said Cool Kate, grimly.

Chick breathed easier. Evidently she hadn't yet recognized him. He was mistaken.

"Now, ladies," said he, pleasantly, "kindly explain why I am made to stand here in this uncomfortable position."

"Because you are in the way, and we are going to remove you."

"Right away."

"Very shortly."

"In what way have I disturbed your plans?"

"Never mind how."

"On my honor, now I——"

"Detectives have no honor."

"Detectives?"

"Least of all Chick Carter or any of his ilk. You see I know you."

Chick never moved a muscle.

"You flatter me, lady," he remarked, coolly.

"You can't deny it."

Cool Kate was a trifle uncertain about Chick's identity.

She willed to be sure before extreme measure

were resorted to to put one of the dangerous Carter trio out of business.

"I have always found it useless to argue with women," said Chick, sarcastically.

"Oh, have you?"

"Yes; they'll stick to their own belief anyway. It's breath wasted."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Cool Kate smiled in spite of herself.

The smile was gone in an instant.

"Enough of this," said she, sternly. "Your fate will be determined shortly. Come with us."

"Certainly."

Chick was as polite as if he had been in a ballroom.

"You go ahead, Rita," said Cool Kate. "Walk backward and keep him well covered. I am the best shot, and I'll come behind."

Cool Kate stepped a little closer to the detective, bringing her weapon still nearer his nose.

She jerked her head as a signal for Rita to step out the door.

Rita obeyed so far as starting was concerned.

But she didn't carry out the rest of the programme. Something happened.

As she stepped forward and was nearest to Chick, his hands came down from over his head, quick as light.

One hand grabbed the wrist of Cool Kate, while the other seized that of the woman, Rita. The hands that held the weapons were gripped in a clasp of steel and Chick was no longer in front of the muzzles.

The grip tightened and the two women winced with pain.

The pistols dropped to the floor.

Rita cried out and Cool Kate uttered an imprecation.

Before they well realized what had happened Chick slipped a pair of steel bracelets on the wrist of each, and thus they stood, linked together, raging, before the detective.

"Just like a pair of women," said Chick, tauntingly.

"Curse you!" gritted Cool Kate.

"You stood and talked till you let your advantage slip away from you."

"Curse you!" This from Rita.

"That's what your friend here proposed. Go ahead if you like."

"Release me instantly, or I will kill you!" stormed Cool Kate.

"Just like a woman," mocked Chick; "how are you going to do it?"

"I'll show you."

"Oh, don't. Now I'll take the liberty of locking you in this room a while till I explore your house."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. I'll scream."

"Get at it."

"If I do you'll never leave the house alive."

"I'll take the chance. I'm armed now," picking up the weapons on the floor.

"They're not loaded."

"I have one then that is. I'll release you on one condition."

"Name it."

"You have a prisoner in this house. I want her. Take me to her and I will not deliver you to the police."

"You admit that you are a detective."

"I admit nothing."

"You are Chick Carter."

"You're a woman. There's no use trying to argue the matter. Do you accept my offer."

"There's no prisoner here," Cool Kate denied.

"I know better. Rita said so."

"That was only a part of our game to trap you," said Rita.

"I know better. You had no plan for luring me here. You came upstairs to see your friend here, and then you put your heads together. Now, take your choice. Deliver the prisoner and go free or stay here and lose the prisoner to boot."

Chick stood ready to close the door on them.

"We'll have to do as he says," said Cool Kate, winking at Rita.

The wink didn't pass Chick.

"If you say so," agreed the other, "I don't care."

"Release our hands, then," said Cool Kate.

"We'll have the prisoner released first."

"But what can we do with our hands fast together?"

"Nothing but lead the way."

"Come, Rita. Our turn will come."

"Then let him look out for himself," said Rita.

Ascending another flight, the two women paused in front of a small door.

"She is in there," said Rita.

Chick kicked the door open.

Within, on the edge of a small bed, sat a young girl.

CHAPTER VII.

COOL KATE ON DECK.

There was no light in the room.

"Go in and light the gas," Chick commanded.

The women went in, sullenly, and Rita lit the gas.

Chick looked sharply at the woman, who sprang up at sight of him.

He recognized her at once as the real Winonah Andrews.

There was no little resemblance between her and Cool Kate.

"Oh, sir, are you a friend?" she cried, seeing the women handcuffed.

"I am, young lady, never fear."

"Thank Heaven! Take me away from this awful place."

The poor girl was almost hysterical.

"That's what I'm here for, if nothing breaks," said Chick, grimly.

"These women locked me in," said Winonah. "There was no other way out. The windows are barred, and I've been crying my eyes out. My brother is dead, and I've come all the way——"

"Never mind, I know all about it," Chick assured her.

"Are you satisfied?" broke in Cool Kate.

"Oh, yes," said Chick, cheerfully.

"Then free us."

"I will—at the front door."

He took Winonah by the hand and led her out of the room behind the two women. These he made descend the stairs ahead of him.

"What an awful place," whispered the young woman, with a shudder. "I have even heard them talking of murder since I have been here."

"Of murder?"

"Yes. Some old man who has been killed——"

"What's that you are saying?" demanded Cool Kate.

"She is telling me of a murder that you know something of here."

Cool Kate paled and bit her lip.

"The girl has been having nightmares," she asserted.

"I heard a man and a woman talking plainly. The name of Cutler—Barton Cutler was mentioned."

"Indeed," said Chick.

Barton Cutler, well known as New York's most miserly man, had been found dead in his West Washington Square home several days before. A dagger was in his breast. His safe stood open in his library, rifled of stocks and cash to an amount variously fixed at eighty and one hundred thousand dollars.

As he lived entirely alone, cooking his own meals, no one knew just how much the old miser kept in his home. His relatives all lived in distant States. The police of the city—no unusual matter—were completely baffled.

"What do you know of the murder of Barton Cutler?" he demanded, confronting Cool Kate.

"Nothing," replied Cool Kate, serenely, recovering her composure.

"I don't believe you, and if I hadn't agreed to free you I'd turn you over to the police."

"What. You really have some regard for your word—and you a detective?" taunted Cool Kate.

"When I make a promise I keep it—even if made to a crook. And I promise to see you in jail yet."

"Don't be too sure of it. As you are dealing square with us, I'll warn you that henceforth it's war to the death between us. This town isn't big enough for both of us."

"True. You need a trip on the water. You'll get it—to Sing Sing."

"Maybe. I've warned you."

"I won't be unprepared."

Chick put Winonah out the door, and then unfastened the handcuffs on the wrists of the two women.

Slamming the door, he hurried down the stoop and whistled to Solomon, who had been patiently waiting on the curb.

The three hurried together down the street.

No sooner, however, had the door closed on them than Cool Kate hurriedly threw off her dress, fairly tearing at it in her haste, and stood revealed clad in man's attire.

Quickly arranging her hair, she clapped a derby on her head, glued a light mustache to her upper lip and darted down the stoop.

As she ran down she met Dorriter coming up.

"Right on the spot," she said, hurriedly explaining what had happened. "We must recapture the girl, or she will spoil our whole game and make trouble by telling what she has heard about that Cutler case."

"Well, let's get after them," said Dorriter.

Cool Kate looked down the street after Chick and Winonah, and was surprised to see two men with the girl, one on each side.

"You follow on the other side of the street, Dolph,"

said she, "Carter would recognize you. At the dark corner we'll do the two up. You know the spot."

Dorriter hurried to the opposite side and the pursuit began.

As he crossed a grimy-looking bootblack, who might have been seen loitering around without attempting to get any customers, swung his box over his shoulder and walked after him, whistling cheerily.

Chick introduced Winonah to Solomon.

"I'll take her to your house. Your sister can look after her."

"And why are you taking me there, sir?" queried Winonah.

"For your safety."

"But why not take me where my dead brother is. I don't understand these mysterious doings."

"Your brother is not dead?"

"Not dead?"

The poor girl could scarcely believe her ears.

"No more dead than you are."

"Thank Heaven! I have been deceived. But where is my brother?"

"He is safe. He could not be safer. He is away from town just now. I promise you may see him soon."

"Then what does all this mean? Mr. Dorriter telegraphed that Charlie was dead."

"Your friend Dorriter and that woman we just left are the head of a gang of insurance swindlers. Your brother's life was heavily insured and they had to get you here in New York and keep you out of the way while Cool Kate palmed herself off as you, in order to work the scheme."

"Then they are going to get the thousand dollars that was on Charlie's life?"

"It is not one thousand, but six."

"Then they are cheating me?"

"Not if your brother is living."

"Charlie never told me that the policy was for but one thousand."

"Probably he didn't know it himself. Dorriter manipulated the whole proceeding. Now tell me how you got into the hands of these people."

"Why, I was met at the station by Mr. Dorriter and taken right to that house we just left."

"What did he say to you?"

"Told me how Charlie died."

"Had you told no one in Philadelphia that you were coming to New York."

"Why, yes. A kind old lady I met in my boarding house. I told her all about it."

"She asked no end of questions?"

"Yes. And was very kind to me."

"No doubt. That's the way they get their information. Pretty slick schemers, they."

Chick thought he heard a step close behind him, and, suspecting Cool Kate to be up to mischief, turned suddenly.

A slender young fellow with a slight mustache brushed by him.

Chick drew Winonah aside to let him pass.

He did so without looking at them.

Going straight on he turned the next corner, and when Chick and his companions reached the same corner he was not in sight.

It was quite dark here. Great trees lined the sidewalk and little light penetrated their foliage. The three were walking along Riverside Drive, which was apparently deserted just here.

"Have you told me all you heard about the murder the man and women were talking about?" asked Chick.

"I suspect the man was the person who killed the old miser. I didn't learn his name. They were laughing at the inability of the police to find out the murderer or how he got out of the house, when all the doors and windows were found locked and barred."

"Did you hear how?"

"No."

"Did you hear what the old miser had been killed for?"

"Yes. For some papers that had been in his safe and part of the money that was there."

"Then I was not far wrong."

"You knew something about it?"

"It is the sensation of the hour."

At that instant the detective received a blow on the head that knocked him senseless.

The young Jew got a punch in the eye at almost the same time that sent him rolling into the gutter and a young man seized Winonah's hand.

"Come, Win," he cried, "come with me."

"Who are you?" as she held back.

"I'm Charlie. Don't you know me. But no time now to tell you."

It was a dark place, and as she could not see the face of the young man very well she could not disprove it. The voice was not that of her brother.

"But my friends," she gasped, "why did you serve them so?"

"Your friends. They are the worst rascals in New York, Win, and it is lucky that I happened along."

The young woman stopped short now.

"Release me!" she cried. "You are not Charlie!"

"Of course I am Charlie. You would expect some change in two years, wouldn't you?"

"I will not be imposed on. Release me!"

She struggled to get away, but her captor threw his arms around her and drew her into the deeper shadows.

At this moment a cab drove up and a man jumped out.

Perceiving the two figures, he called out:

"Everything all right, Kate?"

"Yes. I have the girl. Let's away."

Winonah was again in the hands of Cool Kate and Dorriter.

Bundling her into the cab, they drove off rapidly. If they had looked behind they would have seen the same bootblack who had followed Dorriter from Kate's house clinging to the rear springs.

Cool Kate hadn't won out yet. The grimy bootblack was Patsy.

CHAPTER VIII.

PATSY HAS A WARM TIME.

The cab drove directly to Dorriter's house.

Dorriter and Cool Kate were confident that no one had followed them.

They half carried the weeping Winonah up the front steps and the door closed after them.

As the cab drove off the bootblack swung to the ground, stepped into the shadow and made some rapid changes in his appearance.

Then he boldly ascended the steps and rang the bell vigorously.

After a long wait there was a rattle of a key in the lock and a huge negro swung the door open a little.

Seeing a slight figure only, he opened it a little more.

A neatly dressed youth stood in the vestibule.

"I represent the *Morning Star*," said he. "I wish to see Mr. Dorriter about his secretary's death. I understand the insurance companies will refuse to pay the amount of the policy on his life on the ground of fraud."

"Well, it's too late for Mr. Dorriter to see you now. Call to-morrow."

"To-morrow won't do. I guess he'll see me to-night," said Patsy—for it was he—pushing past the negro and stepping into the carpeted hall.

"Well, you have got a nerve," said the negro, when a voice sounded on the stairs:

"Show the gentleman into the library, Gretson. I will be down directly."

The voice was Dorriter's.

It struck Patsy that he had been listening on the stairs to his conversation with the negro.

Gretson showed Patsy into the library and turned on the electric lights and left him.

Patsy was in a large, high-ceilinged room, with books around three sides and with tall, stained glass windows in the fourth side.

Patsy guessed that this room was at the back of the house.

A mahogany writing table was in the center of the room.

In front of it was a curiously carved chair of dark wood, deep of seat and with huge encircling arms.

Suspended above was a great metal chandelier, apparently of much weight.

After a few minutes Dorriter entered, smiling pleasantly.

Patsy arose from a couch where he had been sitting as Dorriter entered.

"Well, I want to talk with you about your secretary's death. We got a story to-night to the effect that his life was heavily insured."

"Indeed. Won't you sit down? Sit here where you can write."

He indicated the curiously carved chair.

Patsy sat down in it and found the huge chair more comfortable than it looked.

Dorriter sat down opposite and toyed with a stiletto like envelope opener on the desk in front of him.

The other hand was out of sight behind the desk.

"Well, what have you to say?" asked Patsy, producing notebook and pencil.

"There was but little insurance on my unfortunate secretary's life. Only six thousand."

"According to our story the insurance company is not satisfied with the identification of the body."

"The identification is made by his own sister."

"It is intimated that another is passing herself off as the sister and that the whole business is a scheme to defraud the insurance companies, similar in effect to those insurance swindles of Chicago and Washington which have recently attracted so much attention."

Dorriter gnawed his mustache and looked at Patsy suspiciously.

The detective could see that he was wondering how any one but the Carters or one of his own gang could know so much about his schemes.

Still the enterprise and detective abilities of the metropolitan newspaper man were well known to Dorriter.

"All this is pure buncombe," said Dorriter. "May I ask the source of your information."

"We always protect our informants," was the reply.

Patsy was sitting directly in front of a large mirror. Behind him were the drawn curtains leading into the front reception-room.

Patsy, keeping one eye on this mirror, saw the curtains quiver and the face of a woman peer through regarding him intently.

It was Cool Kate. As she had never seen Patsy before she could not identify him.

Dorriter was looking at her inquiringly.

She nodded her head affirmatively.

"Anyway," continued Dorriter, "I do not believe that any such story has reached any newspaper office. I believe you are a fakir—a spy from the insurance company or a detect——"

He was interrupted by a rush of feet down the stairs and along the hallway and the appearance at the door of Winonah Andrews.

"Oh, sir," she cried, loking at Patsy, "save me. Take me from this horrible place."

Before she could say more a hand had seized her from behind and dragged her back.

Patsy made a move to arise.

Suddenly there was a click, and Patsy felt the curved arms of the chair closing in on him.

At the same moment there was a rattling sound above his head.

Quick as lightning Patsy slipped under the closing arms onto the carpet.

He was just in time.

The heavy metal chandelier, suspended by a chain, crashed with a thud on the spot where he was sitting.

If he had remained in the chair he would undoubtedly have been crushed into pulp.

Springing to his feet, Patsy sprang over the library table at Dorriter.

The worthy pressed a button and immediately the whole room was plunged into darkness.

Patsy again dropped to the floor.

As he did so he heard the whistle of something through the air where he had stood, and the sound of some object striking the floor beyond.

It was the heavy stiletto envelope opener.

Patsy, feeling along the floor, touched a heavy cuspidor with his hand. Getting a good grip on it, he raised himself up slightly.

His eyes were becoming accustomed to the darkness now, and he could see a dark object some feet away.

Patsy let drive with the cuspidor.

A grunt of pain showed that he had not missed his mark.

Groping along the floor, he reached the wall on the side he had entered. He had watched Gretson turn on the light and thought he could find the switch.

He felt along the wall and soon his hand came in contact with the button.

Pressing it, the room was immediately flooded with light. Dorriter stood in the middle of the room, pistol in hand.

Patsy covered him quick as a flash.

"Now, sir, just stand there a few minutes," said Patsy, backing toward the door.

It was his intention to get away and get Nick.

He had reckoned without Gretson, the negro.

Suddenly the pistol was jerked out of his hand and he was tripped sprawling on the floor.

Gretson sat upon him.

"Leave him there, Gretson," said Dorriter, "he likes our house. We'll let him stay."

Gretson got up and Dorriter walked to the doorway. Gretson passed out.

"Good-night, Mr. Detective; pleasant dreams," said Dorriter.

His hand rested along the wall. He pressed a hidden button and stepped quickly without the door.

Instantly heavy metal coverings fell over the door leading into the hall and in front of the portiéres.

Heavy iron coverings were falling more slowly over the windows.

Patsy grabbed up the cuspidor again and jammed it under one window shutter.

It left about ten inches space.

Patsy prepared to try to crawl under when he became aware of a wheezing sound like escaping steam.

He detected a peculiar penetrating sweet odor.

"Chloroform, by Jove!" he said. "They're injecting it into this closed room. I'll have to hustle."

Kicking a hole in the window glass, he squeezed

through the aperture, head first, and jumped out into space.

He struck on a rope stretched across the yard, swung a minute, caught with his hands and dropped without mishap to the ground.

"Nice horror chamber that," he muttered, making his way over back fences.

CHAPTER IX.

CHICK MIXES THINGS UP.

Patsy's first act after reaching the street was to make for a telephone booth and get into communication with police headquarters.

Making himself known to the inspector in charge of the detective bureau, he asked that an officer be stationed in front of Dorriter's house night and day and also that one be put on post duty in front of the house behind Dorriter's.

In this way Patsy made sure that Dorriter and Cool Kate would remain in the house with their prisoner.

They would not dare try to get Winonah past the men in blue.

Then Patsy hurried to the Carter house to give an account of himself.

He found Chick there, smarting more under the sting of having been outwitted again by Cool Kate rather than from the thump on his cranium.

His soft felt hat had protected his head from the force of the blow.

Nick came in just after Patsy.

Chick then told the story of his rescue of Winonah and her subsequent retaking by Cool Kate and Dorriter.

Patsy reported his movements and the strenuous time he had in Dorriter's house.

His recital of the mysteries of this residence greatly interested both Nick and Chick.

"Well, boys, I'd go around with you and nab these fellows, but I must meet the police commissioner this evening at dinner to talk over this Cutler murder. I wouldn't be surprised if the insurance swindlers and the Cutler murderers are one and the same. If we bag them it will be quite a feather in our cap."

Chick, who now owed Cool Kate a two-fold grudge, spoke up and suggested that he be allowed to have another try at getting Winonah out of the clutches of Cool Kate.

Nick fell in with his suggestion, and Patsy, grinning quietly to himself, acquiesced readily.

So Chick made careful preparations to move upon the Dorriter stronghold.

Disguising himself completely, he rang the Dorriter bell just at dusk on the next evening.

Gretson opened the door.

"I am from the coroner's office," said Chick, in a pompous tone. "I desire to see Mr. Dorriter. Tell him I am in some little hurry."

Without waiting to be asked in, Chick walked into the reception-room and back into the library where Patsy had had his adventures.

Remembering, however, the dangerous armchair, he took another, but placed it so that he could see in the mirror in the wall behind.

He had scarcely seated himself before a secret panel was noiselessly slipped back and Cool Kate peered out.

She scrutinized Chick carefully.

The detective was unable to tell from the expression of her face whether she recognized him or not.

He was soon to find out.

Dorriter entered while he was wondering.

Chick arose.

"I am from the coroner's office——" he began.

"You are no such thing," said Dorriter, harshly. "You are one of those confounded Carters, and I have my doubts if you will ever see the other two again."

With this he drew from his pocket a long Italian stiletto and moved toward Chick.

The latter saw it was fight and fight hard.

He moved backward and in a semicircle, as if frightened.

He wished to get between Dorriter and the wall, concealed in which was the spring which when pressed barred up all exits and set the hidden chloroform filtering into the room.

Dorriter approached closer and closer.

When in reaching distance he sprang at Chick.

The latter, lithe and active, dodged under his arm and struck him a stiff blow in the neck.

Dorriter went down on his knees, but was up again like a flash.

He rushed furiously at Chick.

Chick waited his coming and at the right moment kicked him good and hard on the shins.

Dorriter shrieked with pain, and the knife dropped from his hand.

Chick made a dive for it.

So did Dorriter.

Their heads came together with a thump.

Chick grabbed the knife and got to his feet.

Dorriter was up almost as quickly.

Running to the wall, he touched the button that started the heavy shutters falling over the exits.

Then he started on a run for the door.

Chick was right behind him.

Seizing him by the coat collar, he spun him around before he reached the door, and flung him sprawling into the middle of the floor.

"There," he said, grimly, "you know the combination. I don't." Then he jumped out of the door before the shutter fell into place and hustled up the long flight of stairs to the next floor.

He could distinguish in the semi-darkness the tall figure of Gretson on the landing.

A deep-throated growl as he approached told him that Gretson wasn't alone.

A heavy body sprang at him as he rushed up the steps.

Chick saw that it was a huge mastiff.

Drawing back, he struck the leaping animal full on the nose.

With a howl of pain the animal fell to the floor.

He was up again in an instant and sprang full at Chick's throat.

The young detective hadn't time to dodge.

Seizing the animal by the throat, he choked him with all his strength and whirled him over the balustrade to the floor below.

He lay there stunned.

Chick turned just in time to meet the negro, Gretson's, rush.

A fierce uppercut on the point of the jaw left the servant lying unconscious on the carpet and Chick sprang up the second flight of stairs to the next floor, where he heard the flutter of a woman's gown.

As he reached the top he was just in time to see Cool Kate vanish through a door and to see thick steel shutters falling over the doorway.

He sprang forward to stop it, but it was too late.

With a crash the barrier fell into place.

Chick turned to the next door. It was also tightly closed up with a sheet of metal. So were all the doors on the floor.

With an exclamation of impatience, Chick turned to the stairway.

To his surprise he saw a solid sheet of steel covering the place where the stairway had been.

He was a prisoner in the narrow hallway.

Looking about him for some means of escape he saw high above him the scuttle opening on the roof.

Placing a chair on a table that stood in the hallway, he was barely able to reach the scuttle.

Fortunately it was unfastened. Pushing it up, he crawled out onto the roof.

"I guess it will take the whole Carter family to corral that bunch," he growled to himself. "Nick will have to get on his mettle."

CHAPTER X.

COOL KATE HATCHES A PLOT.

When Chick made his escape through the scuttle in the roof neither Cool Kate nor Dorriter had the faintest idea that he could get out that way.

They had not taken into account the great athletic ability of the detective, and they thought that they had him safely caged for the present.

They had not absolutely decided what they should do with him, and the pair took counsel together in another room in the house as to how they should dispose of him.

Dorriter was in favor of putting the detective out of the way at once.

Cool Kate, however, in spite of the fact that she had worked a bunco game upon him herself, had taken quite a fancy to Chick.

Chick is a decidedly good-looking and gentlemanly young fellow, and, in spite of the fact that Cool Kate was just about as bad as they make them, she could not bear the thought of killing him.

"Let's turn on the gas in that room," said Dorriter. "You know we have an arrangement by which we can do it easily enough. That will do the work all right."

"I cannot bear to think of killing him," said Kate.

Dorriter laughed hoarsely.

"I believe that you are quite smitten with the boy," he said. "Why should we not kill him as well as any other man."

"I do not want him killed."

"We can't always have what we want."

"We have committed enough crimes without adding murder to the list."

"We must put that chap out of the way. It means either him or us. If he does not die he will land us

in jail, sooner or later. If we get one of the Carters out of the way we will have a big advantage in coping with the others."

"Couldn't we keep him a prisoner here until we make good our escape?"

"Yes, and let him get right out on our trail with all the evidence he has in his possession. That would be a nice thing to do. No, the fellow must be put out of the way. He knows too much. Dead men tell no tales, you know."

Kate began to weaken in her determination to save the life of the young detective.

Dorriter was a man of an iron will, and, although he was a criminal of the lowest type, he had a great deal of force of character in his way. For years he had been accustomed to exert a great deal of influence over the woman.

She knew in her own heart that when his will was opposed to hers that he must win out. She wanted to do right in this case, but she was weak and Dorriter knew it. He had known her so long, and had been engaged with her in so many schemes, that he knew her character like a book and had succeeded in getting her thoroughly under his influence.

He laughed as he looked into the serious face of the woman criminal and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"You let me manage this affair for you," he said. "Women are all right in their way, and you are about as clever as they make them, but this is a case in which the judgment of a man is required. Just leave the matter to me. Chickering Carter must die now if we don't want to spend the greater part of our days in a jail."

Cool Kate sighed.

"I suppose that you are right," she said, "you generally make me do just about as you want to anyway."

Dorriter turned from her and opened the door of the room in which they had been sitting.

"Gretson," he called in a loud whisper.

A moment later, the big negro appeared at the door.

"What is it, sah?" he asked.

"Is there a gas pipe running into that piece of hallway where we have the prisoner?" he asked.

"Yas, sah, de end ob it opens right into de hallway. It runs under de stairs."

"You can turn it on from the cellar?"

"Yas, sah."

Gretson grinned all over.

His head was still singing from the blow that Chick had given him, and he thought it about the best news he had ever heard when Dorriter told him to turn on the gas from the meter in the cellar and thus smother the detective.

He hurried off on this mission with the most cheerful feeling in the world. If he had ever had a conscience, it was not in working order now.

Two hours later, Dorriter, cautiously threw back one of the steel doors into the hallway in which Chick had been locked.

He expected to see Chick lying unconscious on the floor.

He peeped into the room very warily, for he expected that the odor of the illuminating gas would be almost unbearable.

It was not so strong as he had expected it to be.

He stepped a little further inside and found that the air in the room, although tainted with the gas, could still be breathed without a great deal of discomfort.

This surprised him a good deal, but he was even more surprised when he glanced about the room and saw that the form of the detective was nowhere in sight.

He looked around the room and carefully examined all the walls.

He knew, however, that there was no place in that bare inclosure where a man might hide himself.

Then his eye fell on the open scuttle leading to the roof, and he saw at once how he had been fooled.

The cursing he did for the next ten minutes would have made the most hardened pirate turn pale with envy.

Dorriter had led a very tough life, and when he turned loose with his tongue the air became a brimstone blue in his vicinity.

His stream of profanity shouted out at the top of his lungs aroused the attention of Gretson and Cool Kate.

They rushed into the room to see what was the matter, and, needless to say, they were greatly surprised at the state of affairs that they found there.

They were alarmed as well, for they knew that the escape of Chick meant a raid upon their place by the Carters in pretty short order.

Cool Kate was in favor of flying out of town at once, but Dorriter was made of sterner stuff. He had ideas of revenge as well as of safety.

"We'll go out of town all right," he said, "but we'll put the whole Carter crowd right off the face of the earth before we get through with them."

"Where shall we go?" asked Kate.

"You know Maginnis' road house?"

"Down on the Coney Island Boulevard?"

"That's it. That's where we are going now. We'll leave the house locked up just as it is. The prisoner will be safe until we get back."

"The Carters will be around here pretty soon to raid the house."

"Oh, no, they won't."

"Why won't they?"

"Because they are going to follow us down to the road house. You can bet your bottom dollar that I am going to wipe the Carter crowd right off the map this game."

"How are you going to decoy them down there?"

"I'll show you, although it will cost me quite a little for a telegram."

Dorriter sent Gretson for some paper and a pencil and wrote as follows:

"DEAR DICK: The parties you are after have left New York. They are at a road house on the Coney Island cycle path with their prisoner. I learned this by accident, as I was here on another case this afternoon. I cannot help you, as my case takes me away immediately. I have scarcely time to send you this telegram. Get down to the road house right away if you expect to nail the gang you are after. I recognized Dorriter and Cool Kate as they came up, and would have trailed them myself had I not been so busy. Bring all your assistants with you, for you may expect a tough fight. BROADBRIM."

Broadbrim is the name of the only detective in the world whom Nick ever looks to for help in the detective work he does.

The shrewd old Quaker is one of the greatest terrors to criminals in America, and, besides his professional relations, he is a warm personal friend of Nick Carter.

Dorriter had not mingled in criminal circles for the greater part of his life without learning this, and he made good use of his information.

He handed the message he had written over to Gretson.

"Get down to Maginnis' right away and send this telegram from there," he said.

"Very good, sah," said Gretson, reaching for his hat.

"And tell Maginnis to expect us a little later. Tell him that we will have a little job on hand."

Gretson hurried out of the room, and Dorriter turned to Cool Kate.

"I'll leave you here to take care of things till I come back," he said.

"When will you be back?"

"Some time to-night. I advise you not to admit anybody to the house while I am away. Keep all the doors locked, and don't pay any attention to any one who rings or knocks."

Cool Kate agreed to do what he said.

Dorriter then busied himself about the house, making some further preparations for the work he intended to do that night.

He changed the clothes which he wore to a rough tweed suit, such as a laborer might wear.

In one pocket he placed a short heavy club of the kind known as a black jack or life preserver.

In another he put his revolver, a Smith & Wesson weapon of the bulldog pattern.

He reloaded and oiled this weapon before he put it in his pocket.

Evidently he was preparing carefully for the deadly work that he had on hand for that evening.

Then he pulled a slouch hat down over his eyes and left the house, a determined look about his bulldog mouth, and an ugly gleam in his small, deep-set eyes.

He was going to make a last and final effort to get the Carters off his trail, and he knew only too well that the only way to do that was to exterminate them.

He knew enough about the detectives to feel sure that they had gone too far in the present case ever to draw back an inch or relax in their efforts to bring him to justice so long as their strength lasted them.

He was a man of a great deal more than ordinary intelligence, and the plot that he had adopted to get the detectives in his power was a carefully considered one.

He boarded a car for the Bridge, and when he reached there took a surface car for Coney Island.

He did not go as far as the summer resort, but stopped the car in a lonely part of the road about a mile from the island.

A walk across two or three fields brought him to the road house.

Although it was only about a block distant from the great boulevard that stretches all the way from Prospect Park, in Brooklyn, to Coney Island, it is situated behind a clump of trees, and is not visible from the boulevard.

It is a rather lonely spot, for the road is rather deserted at that point.

There are no other road houses or hotels in the vicinity, and the house kept there by McGinnis was frequented only by a select few, most people who passed on the road preferring to go on to the island, which was only a mile away, when they wanted refreshments.

The select few who patronized the road house were men who called themselves "sports," but who were referred to by other people as criminals and blacklegs.

McGinnis, himself, the man who kept the road house, was a fitting captain for such a crew.

He was a stocky, red-haired individual with a broken nose.

In his youth he had been somewhat of a prize fighter, but two or three faked fights had ruined him so far as his career in that path of life was concerned.

Otherwise, in the opinion of the majority of the followers of the prize ring who were acquainted with him, he would have been a world-beater, for his early success as a fighter had been something phenomenal.

Since he had taken to keeping a hotel he had engaged in two or three fights given in private, and had defeated his opponents without the least trouble.

His shady reputation, however, made it impossible for him to fight in public, for no reputable sporting man would have anything to do with him.

It can easily be seen that he must have been a bad character, indeed, when he was too bad to associate with a self-respecting prize fighter.

As a rule, a fighter is not particular as to whom he associates with, but McGinnis was a little too tough for the very toughest of them.

It was to this man that Dorriter went.

He was engaged in a close conversation with him for a long time in the little grimy room in the rear of the bar which was called a parlor by courtesy.

The interview was evidently satisfactory to both parties.

When it was concluded, there was an exultant look on Dorriter's narrow, foxy face.

The redoubtable McGinnis also looked contented and happy as he fingered a fat roll of bills, which had recently found its way into his capacious pocket.

CHAPTER XI.

NICK NIBBLES THE BAIT.

"There it is, boys; look it over for yourselves."

Nick was in his private house, talking to his two assistants, Chick and Patsy. He had thrown on the table before them a telegram which he had just received.

It was signed Broadbrim.

It was not often that Nick, or any one else for that matter, received a telegram from the grim old Quaker, and both Chick and Patsy looked at the telegram with a great deal of interest.

"It's lucky that the old fellow fell in with the people," said Patsy, "otherwise they might have got away from us."

"Yes," said Chick, "they must have made a quick move to get down there so quickly. They had me locked up safely enough two hours ago."

Nick glanced at the telegram and said nothing.

"They must have decided to get right out of town as soon as you escaped, or at least as soon as they discovered that you had escaped," said Patsy; "I think that it was real neighborly of Old Broadbrim to let us know about them. It must have cost him a dollar or so to send this telegram, and he was evidently in a big hurry when he sent it. There are not many men going about nowadays who would do that much for a friend."

Nick picked up the message and looked at it again. His face rarely changes expression, so his assistants could form no idea as to what he was thinking as they looked at him.

"Yes," said Nick, at length, "it was pretty good of Broadbrim to send me this, provided that he did send it."

"Did send it?"

Both of his assistants spoke these words in a breath. They looked inquiringly at their chief.

"You see," continued Nick, "it is just within the range of possibility that this telegram is some trick to get us out of the way."

"You are not going to go down then?"

It was Patsy who spoke, and his face wore a disappointed expression.

Patsy had a true Irish nature, always spoiling for a fight, and he had expected a brisk set-to with Dorriter's gang down at the lonely road house.

Nick laughed when he saw the look on his face.

"Don't get discouraged," he said, "you will not miss any of the fun. We'll have all the scrapping we want before we get through with this case, or I miss my guess."

"Do you think it best to go down then?"

"I think on the whole that it would be the safest

plan. If it really was Old Broadbrim who sent the message we ought to do just exactly what he says."

Patsy breathed a sigh of relief.

"But if there is any suspicion that there is anything crooked about the message," said Chick, "would it not be better for one of us to stay here to watch the house in New York in case the gang might still be there?"

"I think not," said Nick. "If we are going to consider that this advice is given by Old Broadbrim the only thing for us to do is to follow it to the letter. He never gets off any superfluous talk, and the proper way for us to do is to go, all three of us, just as he says in the telegram. If, on the other hand, it is a fake, we ought to disregard it altogether."

"Well, which shall we do?" asked Patsy.

"What do you say yourself?"

"Go," said Patsy, in a loud determined voice.

The boy loved excitement and adventure more than anything else in the world, and his eagerness in hunting it up often led him into dangers that he might have otherwise avoided.

"What do you say, Chick?"

Nick turned to his other assistant.

Chick remained doubtful for a moment.

He had a good deal more caution in his nature than had Patsy.

His longer experience in the detective business had taught him that.

He picked up the telegram and looked at it closely.

"It appears to be all right," he said. "It bears a mark showing that it was sent from the Coney Island office of the Western Union Telegraph Company. That ought to be a sort of guarantee of good faith."

"You do well to notice that," said Nick.

"Of course Dorriter would have had time to get down to Coney Island to send the message by this time."

Patsy now put in his oar again.

"I don't think that he is a shrewd enough man to think of doing that."

He looked at Nick, inquiringly.

"Do we go?" he asked.

"Ask Chick," said Nick; "it's his turn to cast his vote now."

"How about it, Chick?"

"I suppose it's just as well to take the chance," said Chick, "we can only die once any way."

Patsy turned to Nick again.

"Chick has voted," he said; "what do you say yourself?"

"I go with the majority," said Nick, with a smile, "of course we will have to be very careful and be on our guard against any foul play."

Patsy sprang to his feet with a yell of delight.

"Hurray for a gay old time at Coney Island," he cried.

"Before we go," said Nick, "I want you to take a run around to the house and see if everything looks quiet there."

"Very good," said Patsy.

He snatched up his hat and was out of the room in an instant.

Chick and Nick sat quietly talking until he got back about half an hour later.

He reported that there were no signs of life about the house whatever, and, furthermore, he said that he had made inquiries about the neighborhood and learned that Dorriter had driven away in a cab with some other people that afternoon.

This, by the way, was a clever ruse that Cool Kate had engineered after Dorriter had left.

She had an idea that the detectives might be there that afternoon, and she had determined to do something to throw them off the track.

She had called the cab and had been driven about the block in it, arranging things so that any one who saw the cab would think that there was some one else in it besides herself.

Then she had returned to the house on foot through the back alley that ran to the courtyard in the rear from the next street.

Later on in the evening she had heard Patsy thundering at the door and jangling the bell, but she had kept herself and her prisoner so quiet that the house appeared deserted.

No one would have thought for an instant that there was anything living in its dark interior, and, although Patsy made as rigid an examination as he could, he was thoroughly deceived.

Of course Chick and Nick did not know anything about all this.

Consequently they lost no time in getting everything ready for their trip to the road house as soon as Patsy had made his report.

Each of the three examined the charges in his revolver to see that they could rely on the weapon, and

after a hearty supper they set out to the Bridge where they got a car for Coney Island.

It was almost dark when they set out, and by the time they had reached the Bridge it was quite so.

There was no moon, and the sky was very cloudy, as though there were going to be a rainstorm.

"The moon will arise just about the time we get down there," said Nick, "so we will have some light on the subject when we tackle the gang at the road house."

The detective laid out no definite plan of action.

He knew that any such planning would be only useless trouble in a case like the present one.

He and his two assistants understood each other so perfectly that there was seldom any doubt in their minds as to how they should co-operate when they acted together.

In a blind case, like the one they were following, it was altogether impossible to determine on their plan of action in advance.

They boarded a crowded car at the Bridge, and clung on the back platform of the car among a mass of pleasure-loving people bound for the island.

Nick knew where McGinnis' tavern was situated, and dropped off the car as it whirled along past the stretch of road where the road house was situated.

It was as dark as pitch, and the car was bowling along at top speed, but Nick caught on his feet as nimbly as a cat.

Patsy followed suit, but he did not have the same good fortune.

His foot struck a stone, and he rolled head over heels into the ditch at the side of the road.

He climbed out in jig time with nothing to show for his tumble but a slight scratch on his face and a little dust on his clothes.

Chick saw him fall, and waited until he struck a level piece of ground before he made his leap.

He landed all right, and came running back to join the other two detectives.

He and Nick waited while Patsy brushed some of the dust and stickers off his clothes.

"You must be fond of tumbling acts," said Chick; "where did you learn that stunt? It's the greatest way of getting off a car I ever saw. You would make the hit of your life if you did that a couple of times on Broadway."

"That's all right," growled Patsy, brushing away at his clothes.

"Why didn't you tell me you could do it that way before?" continued Chick. "If I had known that you were such an acrobat I would have been more careful in the way I addressed you."

"Never you mind," said Patsy, "you may do it some day yourself."

"I hope I do. If I have ever the good fortune to learn that stunt I'll give up the detective trade. I know a business that would suit better."

"What's that?"

"Variety actor. If you could do that in a vaudeville house on Broadway you would get the biggest round of applause you ever heard in your life."

Chick liked to poke a little fun at Patsy occasionally, but the boy always took it in good part.

"I'll teach you how to do it by and by," he said, "but there is another man I want to teach first."

"Who is that?"

"Dorriter. When I get hold of him again, you'll see him go over just exactly the way I did. I only tried it then to get the hang of it. I wanted to sort of map out what I was going to do to him so that I could put him through the evolutions without a hitch."

"There will be a good many hitches, and one of them will come from my direction if you stand talking here much longer," said Nick.

"I'm all ready," said Chick; "I'm only waiting for Patsy to get quite through with [illegible] before we start. You know that Patsy is [illegible] particular about his appearance. Would you like a little face powder, Patsy? I am sorry that I forgot to bring any with me. I should have remembered it when you were along."

The last part of this remark was sarcasm.

Patsy puts on his clothes in the morning and lets them stay there till he turns in at night, without so much as giving them a thought.

As for toilet—all the toilet Patsy ever bothers with is a cold plunge when he gets out of bed, and a few strokes of a coarse comb through his hair.

"Come on boys," said Nick, "it's time we were at the road house."

Patsy, as well as Nick, knew where the tavern was situated, and he led the way.

Patsy always believes in taking a short cut wherever it is possible, and on the present occasion he leaped a fence that surrounded a tomato field and marched off bounding from furrow to furrow in a way that showed that his fall had done no harm to his locomotive apparatus anyway.

The other two detectives followed suit.

The clouds that had obscured the sky in the earlier part of the evening had begun to clear off a little, and the rising moon shone through them with a wierd, pale light.

It was a walk of nearly half a mile across lots until they came in sight of the tavern.

The road house was a long rambling structure with a big stable behind it.

There was a dim light in one of the windows on the lower floor.

When Patsy reached the fence which separated the field they had crossed from the road on which the tavern was situated, he vaulted lightly over the fence.

The road was very dark on the other side, and there was a clump of bushes casting a heavy shadow just to the right of the spot where Patsy vaulted the fence.

Behind this bush, crouching well within the shadow it threw, there was a man.

As Patsy landed on the ground on the other side of the fence, he sprang upon him from behind.

He made his leap as savagely and as silently as a bulldog.

His hands grasped at the detective's throat, and his full weight struck him in the back.

He was a very heavy man, and, as Patsy was leaning forward when he leaped at him, the boy went down on his face without a sound.

He tried to get up again, but the weight perched on his shoulders was too much for him.

His face was jammed hard into the ground, the dust of the road getting into his mouth and nose and preventing him from making any outcry.

Besides that, there were a pair of strong hands grasping his throat as though it were in a vise.

It was all that Patsy could do to get his breath.

For all that he struggled fiercely, and the man who had attacked him had all that he could do to keep him down.

Meanwhile Nick and Chick were just crossing the fence.

They were in plain view owing to the bright moonlight, but the road in which Patsy was struggling was in a deep shadow.

Patsy had run some little distance ahead of them, and, so far as they knew, he had crossed the road and gone on up to the house.

They had no idea of the fierce, silent struggle that was going on in the road within a few feet of them, and by the time that they had crossed the fence Patsy's assailant had overpowered him and dragged him out of sight into the clump of bushes.

CHAPTER XII.

NICK PUTS UP HIS FISTS.

Chick crossed the fence a litle ahead of Nick.

It was not altogether fortunate for him that he did so.

Just as he leaped over something black and heavy hit him on the head.

It was a sand bag, and Chick fell to the ground as senseless as though he had been treated with a good stiff dose of opium.

Nick saw his companion fall.

He saw the sand bag, and he saw the hand that swung it.

Like a flash he drew his revolver and fired at the dark figure.

Crack!

The report broke the stillness with a startling sound, and the flash from the revolver showed Nick the figure of a man tumbling backward.

Crash!

He fell to the road in a heap.

"He is done for, I guess," said Nick.

He drew a little back from the fence.

At that moment something stuck him from behind.

It was a fist, hard enough and powerful enough to have felled an ox.

It caught Nick right between the shoulder blades and sent him head first among the tomato plants.

His revolver flew from his hand, but he was on his feet again in an instant.

He whirled around like a whirlwind and saw facing him one of the most powerfully-built men he had ever laid his eyes on.

He was standing with one hand drawn back just as though he had not moved since he struck the detective.

Nick recognized him at a glance. It was McGinnis, the prize fighter, the man who was believed by experts to be able to beat any man in the world to a jelly.

Nick ran his eyes over the splendid figure of the man as it stood out clear and distinct in the moonlight.

His eyes took in at a glance the bull neck, the splendid broad shoulders and deep chest, the slender waist and long arms of the man before him.

McGinnis advanced on him.

"Put up yer hands and fight, ye d—d detective," he said; "I could have killed ye with a shot, but I'm goin' to hammer ye to bits with me fists. It will give me more pleasure. I have an old grudge against ye. Put up yer fists and fight."

McGinnis threw off his coat as he spoke.

He wore nothing under it but an athletic jersey, which left his arms, shoulders and neck, heavy-plated with great sinuous muscles, bare and gleaming in the moonlight.

Nick had been partially dazed by the blow, but he saw that there was a chance for him.

He tossed his coat on the ground and rolled up his sleeves without a word.

He faced the big man opposite to him with set teeth and a pale, determined face.

Nick was a good boxer, one of the best amateurs in America, but he had never in all his life met a man like this in the ring.

He knew that it was to be a fight to the finish, and he knew that there was not time for talk.

The pugilist advanced toward him with a light springing step that showed that he was in good condition.

He crouched rather low, and sparred at the detective for a moment with great menacing fists.

Then he led with his left.

The ground in the tomato field was not very good for foot work, but Nick danced away out of reach of the long arm.

Then he stepped in with a left lead.

The fighter was ready for it.

His head ducked to one side, and Nick's hard clinched fist slipped around the back of his neck without doing any harm, while his right came across and struck Nick in the ribs.

There was a moment of close in-fighting.

Nick worked both hands like trip hammers on the body of his opponent.

The fighter reached for his jaw with his right.

If the blow had gone home it would have ended Nick then and there.

As it was it went rather high, landing on the detective's jawbone.

Nick's head rocked back, and a thousand bright stars danced before his eyes.

He managed to get one hand inside the arms of the fighter and landed on his face.

The blow was a light one, but it enabled Nick to back ground and dance away from his opponent.

McGinnis was after him in a minute, however.

He understood fighting from A to Z, and he knew that he had his opponent shaky for a moment.

Like a tiger he sprang forward at Nick.

Nick shot his arm up to block the lead, but he was a thought too late.

The blow caught him on the temple, and he went staggering back.

His ability to sprint stood him in good stead now, for, in spite of his groggy condition, he managed to keep away from his foe for a moment.

McGinnis, however, was as active on his feet as any man that Nick had ever seen, and he came after the detective as fast as he knew how.

Nick knew that there was no chance for him to sidestep this rush.

He ducked his head down and ran in to meet it.

Crash—he received a blow over the ear and went down.

The fighter also fell to the ground.

He had thrown all his weight behind the blow, and it had missed hitting Nick squarely by a fraction of an inch.

He climbed to his feet before Nick did, and stood watching him for a moment a few paces distant.

Nick could see his chest heaving, and could see a red spot on his face where he had landed on him.

He got to his feet again and put up his hands, waiting for McGinnis to lead.

He did not have to wait long, for McGinnis came right for him.

He was a little more wary now, for he saw that he had to do with a strong man and a skillful, shifty boxer.

He feinted with both hands trying to draw Nick's lead, but that maneuver did not work for a cent.

Nick knew too much to throw himself open by leading at his antagonist, so he kept away.

He was glad of the opportunity to get his breath again, and he let the fighter dance right around him, feinting with both hands and looking for an opening.

Then, as his antagonist came around so that the moon shone in his face, he ran in with a left swing, following it up with a right.

The fighter ducked in under the left, but the right caught him on the point of the jaw and brought him up straight.

Nick landed twice more, but the blows were not well directed and hit so high on his opponent's face that they did him no harm.

McGinnis drove in with right and left—the punch on the jaw did not daze him as it would a less experienced fighter.

Nick blocked both the blows, catching one in the palm of his hand, but the fighter was as quick as a cat and lifted his fist to his jaw before Nick could get his hands up to block it.

Down went Nick for the second time, while the pugilist drew back a few paces with his fist drawn back ready to deliver a knockout when his opponent should rise to his feet again.

Nick saw this, and he had good reason to dread that terrible right.

He had felt it more than once during the encounter, and he knew that if it landed again on his jaw he was done for.

He felt weak and played out.

The awful blows he had received made him groggy and sick at the stomach, but he set his teeth together and prepared for a final rush before he went down and out.

He arose to his feet and rushed blindly at his opponent.

He had the satisfaction of feeling one of his fists hit hard against the fighter's face, although the other went wide of him altogether.

Then came another brief moment of ferocious infighting, and then Nick slipped to the ground while McGinnis staggered back a little way.

Nick was up again in a moment.

The fighter came at him, but Nick got away, dancing off across the plowed field as though it were a ballroom floor.

The feeling of sickness had gone away, although he still felt very weak.

He could see, however, that McGinnis was also tired, and that cheered him up considerably.

The fighter ran after him with a long left lead, but Nick managed to slip it over his shoulder and counter full on his opponent's nose.

The pugilist came at him again, but Nick kept him at long range.

They ran around exchanging left leads, none of which did very much damage.

Then McGinnis made another effort to get close to his opponent.

Nick ran to one side, and the fighter went down on one knee.

He was up in a flash, and rushing again.

Nick ran in under his lead, and both went down in a heap.

This time neither one had received a heavy blow, but it was Nick who sprang to his feet first and stood looking at his opponent while he arose.

He could see that the fighter was very much surprised.

He might well be surprised, for never in all his life had he met a man who had given him the struggle that Nick had.

All his professional antagonists had gone down before his crushing blows in one or two rounds.

He had plenty of sand and courage, however, for he came at the detective again like a battering ram.

Both men landed heavily, and both went to the ground.

Both of them were weakening, for they had fought with tremendous ferocity and without the slightest pause or intermission.

This sort of thing could not last long.

Nick knew it and tried to get away from the next rush but failed, catching a right full in the face.

He staggered back blinded and dazed, and McGinnis, seeing his plight, rushed him.

Nick made a blind swing at his opponent and caught him full on the jaw. It staggered the giant, and, before he could pull himself together, Nick landed heavily on the side of the jaw with his other hand.

McGinnis went down in a heap.

He struggled up again.

Nick was so weak and tuckered out that he could hardly see him, but he knew that it was now or never with him.

He staggered forward and swung his right again.

This time the fighter went down for good, stunned and unconscious.

Nick dropped upon him, drew his handcuffs from his pockets, and fastened them to his wrists.

Then he fell forward in a dead faint on the body of the man he had just defeated.

CHAPTER XIII.

BACK TO THE CITY.

Nick did not recover consciousness for several moments.

When he did come around he felt the big body of McGinnis stirring about beneath him.

The prize fighter was just regaining his senses.

Nick knew that he had no time to lose.

He drew a cord from his pocket and tied the scoundrel's ankles together.

Then he arose to his feet and steadied himself for a moment while he looked about him.

Then he saw a figure coming toward him across the field.

He reached for his revolver but found it missing.

Then he remembered that it had fallen to the ground, and that he had not recovered it.

He stepped back to avoid the figure coming toward him.

The man who was approaching evidently saw him, for he called out in a low voice:

"Is that you, Nick?"

Nick's heart gave a bound of joy.

It was his assistant, Chick.

"It's I—all right, what there is left of me," said Nick. "How are you?"

"Pretty groggy; I was sandbagged, you know. When I came to, there was a dead man lying beside me in the road."

"I shot him."

"Was he the man who sandbagged me?"

"Yes; where's Patsy?"

"Search me, he went ahead of us, if I remember rightly."

"You look used up, what have you been doing yourself?"

"Just had a fist fight with McGinnis himself. There he lies."

Nick pointed to the prostrate form of the prize fighter.

Chick took a look at him and whistled.

"You must have handed him out a few good ones," he said.

"He handed me a few good ones," said Nick, "but we must set out after Patsy. He may have gone on to the house."

"How about this prisoner of yours?"

"Let him lie there," said Nick, "he's safe enough," and he led the way over to the house.

They climbed the fence very cautiously, taking a look at the figure of the dead man as they passed and went up close to the road house.

There was a light still burning in one window, and Nick and Chick peeped into it.

It was a grimy little barroom with a small bar running across one end of it.

There was no bartender in sight, but in a chair at one end of the room sat a tough-looking individual, who might have tended a bar once in his life.

He was reading a paper by the light of a small lamp, and, beside him, on a window that was on the opposite side of the room, lay a Smith & Wesson revolver within easy reach of his hand.

At the other side of the room was the prostrate form of a man bound and gagged.

Nick gave a muttered exclamation when he saw it.

"It's Patsy," he said. "The boy is in there safe and sound."

"Yes, he wouldn't be tied up that way if they had killed him."

"Get around to the other side of the house and see if you can reach in the window and swipe that pistol on the window ledge."

Nick gave this order to his assistant in a whisper, and Chick stole away.

The window opposite was opened a little way at the bottom, and Nick, watching closely, saw Chick's hand steal in and remove the weapon, while the man reading the paper never stirred from his position.

Chick came back around the house a moment later.

"What next?" he asked, balancing the revolver, which was loaded, in his hand.

"Wait here until I get around to the other window," said Nick, "when you see me raise the sash a little, fire through the glass, and put the light out. Then jump in the window and cut Patsy loose. Mark the place where he is so that you can go to him in the dark."

"How about the fellow that's reading the paper."

"I'll take care of him," said Nick.

He moved off around the house while Chick took up his position at the open window.

A moment later he saw the opposite window raised a little.

It made a little noise as it went up.

The man who was reading a paper inside the barroom looked up in surprise.

He was more surprised when he heard the crack of the revolver, crash of glass, and saw the light disappear as though by magic.

A moment later Nick's hands clutched his throat, and he was borne to the ground and bound securely.

Then Nick lighted things up a little with the electric pocket lantern which he always carries with him.

Patsy was on his feet and seemed sound and well, save for a few bruises on his face.

No time was lost in getting the two prisoners into the barroom.

The dead man was also dragged into the road house, which seemed to be absolutely deserted save for the people that the Carters had already met with.

Both the prisoners talked freely enough when they came to their senses.

They admitted that the telegram was only a plot to get the Carters to that lonely spot, and they confessed that they had been paid well to put the Carters out of the way.

The detectives called up the Coney Island police station on the nearest telephone, and turned McGinnis and his companion over to the care of the policemen who arrived in a patrol wagon.

They had long been expecting to make a raid on the road house, and the news they heard was not much of a surprise for them.

The dead man was turned over to the coroner, and, after giving their evidence in regard to his death, the detectives started back for New York, determined to run down the Dorriter gang the next day.

Afterward, when they had more leisure, they returned to press their charges against McGinnis and his companion, both of whom got long terms in State's prison.

It was midnight when Nick and his two assistants got back to New York.

All three were thoroughly tired out, and as they could do little that night they turned in, resolved to run down Dorriter and Cool Kate the next day.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CARTERS WIN OUT.

The next day the Carters moved in force on the Cool Kate and Dorriter fortress.

They did not demand admission.

Having made their police arrangements, they waited until nearly midnight to make the attack.

Then they began operations.

Nick was to gain admission by the front, Chick by the rear and Patsy by the roof.

Nick attacked the front door with a jimmy.

Noiselessly forcing it open, he stepped inside.

As he did so the house was flooded with light and an electric gong rang loudly over his head.

He had stepped on an automatic burglar alarm.

At the same minute Dorriter, fully dressed, stepped out of the library door.

He held a sharp Malay *yataghan* in his hand that he had evidently snatched from the wall.

He was afraid to use firearms, as the sound would attract the attention of the officers stationed in front.

He knew the Carters never hunted with the police at their heels.

He came at Nick like a whirlwind.

Swinging the sharp weapon, he aimed a blow at Nick that would have put him out of business permanently if it had hit home.

But Nick wasn't waiting for the blow to strike.

Springing forward like a football tackle, he caught Dorriter around the legs and threw him over his shoulder.

The impetus of Dorriter's approach and the lift of Nick's strong arms threw him high in the air and he fell on his neck and shoulders with a crash.

Then he lay quite still.

His collar bone had been dislocated.

Nick heard sounds of conflict in the basement and ran down the short flight of stairs.

Chick had picked the lock of the basement door and entered at the same time as Nick, and, starting upstairs, had run fairly into the arms of Gretson.

Gretson had some old scores to settle, and he went at Chick hammer and tongs.

Chick fought gamely, but the negro was the stronger and soon had Chick on his back.

His fingers were sinking into the young detective's throat as Nick came up.

Nick wasted no time in words.

One blow from his iron fist and Gretson toppled over to wake to consciousness no more for an hour.

Chick handcuffed him and did the same office for Dorriter as they passed up.

Both then ascended to the next floor.

They searched through all the rooms of this floor and found them empty.

They started up the next flight just as Patsy, who had had quite a time forcing his way through the scuttle, which had been barred up since Chick's escape through it, dropped into the hallway.

As he did so he was immediately covered by Cool Kate, who stood with her back to a small door at the end of the hall.

Her back was toward the stairs and she had not heard Nick and Chick come up the thickly-carpeted steps. "You might as well say your prayers," the two heard her say to Patsy.

Patsy smiled pleasantly.

He could see Nick and Chick.

His smile aggravated the desperate woman.

Quick as a flash she fired.

Patsy was watching her, however, and dropped to the floor as she pulled the trigger.

The bullet passed harmlessly over his head.

Before Cool Kate could fire again her wrists were grasped from behind by the iron grip of Nick Carter and a pair of steel bracelets quickly adorned her white arms.

Cool Kate looked at the three detectives furiously.

Then she smiled.

"Well, you win," she said, "but you had to get up on your mettle."

Chick opened the door behind her and discovered Winonah, pale and frightened, standing in the middle of the floor.

He led her to the street and took her to the house of Solomon Einvitz, where the latter's sister cared for her.

Nick and Chick led Cool Kate to the front door, where the patrol wagon previously directed to be on hand received her, defiant to the end.

Dorriter and Gretson were also bundled in.

An ambulance surgeon was called to set Dorriter's collar bone.

The insurance scheme was exploded and the clique of swindlers who had so successfully operated in other cities was completely broken up.

Dorriter broke down after a time in the Tombs and confessed to the killing of Barton Cutler. He had left the house by the front door, pulling it to with a piece of silk cord. The body that Dorriter was palming off as Charlie Norton's was that of a nephew of Cutler, who had died.

Chick secured the release of Charlie Norton and he was permitted to return home with his sister, under promise never again to depart from the straight and narrow path.

Cool Kate, defiant to the bitter end, was tried and sentenced to several years in Sing Sing.

The credit for the capture of the queen of the crooks and her accomplice was rightfully accorded to the Carters by police and public, all of whom reckoned the achievement one of the cleverest and nerviest pieces of detective work the great trio had ever done.

THE END.

Who fired that shot that killed a beautiful girl and what was the murderer's object? These were questions that puzzled and interested the great Carter trio, and led them into fierce battles of wits and muscles. It was a case that cannot fail to interest from beginning to end, and is splendidly narrated in No. 350. "Nick Carter's Life Chase; or, The Shot From Ambush."

FF 272

STORIES OF MYSTERY.

It's a mystery where all these good stories are coming from.
It's also a mystery who are going to get the prizes.
The prizes themselves are no mystery.
They are the finest we have ever offered.
See page 31.

The Spinning Ghost.

(By H. T. Pringle, Carthage, Mo.)

In southern New Hampshire stands an old house which was once claimed to be haunted. It had been a tavern, owned by two brothers and two sisters named Mason.

The youngest of the family, Hannah, had been jilted in her youth. After her desertion, she never entered any door save her own house, but gave her strength to hard work. She would hatch flax for weeks, and spin and weave without a thought of rest.

She died after a short illness, and still, travelers said that their slumbers were disturbed by the whirr of the wheel. Soon it was whispered about that the Mason house was haunted. Strange sounds were heard from the garret, where Hannah had always worked, and plainest of all was the hum of the great wool wheel.

The brothers heard the story, and at once set out to solve the mystery. Joseph went to the garret and watched. After a time the wheel began to revolve. He struck a light. On the rim of the wheel was a large rat, running around.

Frequent visits to the garret rendered this rat so tame that he would come out on the spinning wheel by daylight, and several others were seen to come and take a spin on the wheel, as if it was a pleasant recreation.

Steve Spenser.

(By L. A. Norcross, Winchendon, Mass.)

Far back among the hills, away from the village of ——, Colo., not long ago, there lived an old man named Jake Spenser, whom strangers would call a miser. He dwelt there alone in a cabin, near which stood an empty silver claim, which the old man owned. There was something very peculiar about him, and a feeling of pity came over every one who heard the story of his life.

It was about 1890 when he first came there to settle. He had a young son, Steve, whom he almost worshiped—he being his sole comfort and companion. Having built his cabin, he and his son worked the claim for several years without interference. As the boy grew older, he became dissatisfied with the work, and had a secret longing in his heart to go out into the world and travel, and not be shut up there like an animal. This longing grew more and more each day. He used to make frequent trips to the village for provisions. On one of these trips he had attended a lawn party and became acquainted with a young city girl, who was spending her vacation there. She also had a great fascination for him. As the weeks flew by, they became greatly attached to one another. So much so, that Steve's father heard of the affair. He was much angered, and swore that his son should never marry. He was in a very thoughtful mood for some time, as his son had noticed. At last he had wrought himself up to such a pitch that he could stand it no longer. He called his son to him and told him that he must give up his intentions or leave the cabin, never to enter it again. The young man refused to give up his designs, and the old man bade him leave the cabin, that he might never see him again. The boy left, and his whereabouts were unknown to his father. Steve's father had an old friend, always known as "Silas, the Trapper," who kept the village tavern. Silas said to him one day:

"Have yer hearn anything from Steve since he went away?"

The old man remained quiet for a few minutes, and then said: "No, I hain't."

"Say, Jake, don't yer think yer did wrong ter turn Steve out ther way yer did?"

The old man quickly and frankly replied: "Yes, Si, I did wrong there, and if I could see my boy to-night, I would welcome him home with all my heart. The affair has broken me down completely."

At this saying, old Silas made a deep resolution to help his friend in some way.

Not long after Silas sat in the tavern office talking with an agent. In the conversation, Silas drifted toward his friend, Jake. He told the agent the story of Jake's life. The gentleman asked to see a picture of the boy. This was quickly shown, and he told the following:

"About four months ago I had occasion to visit Seattle, Wash., as manufactories were springing up there. I am quite positive that I met this youth, or now a man, on one of the steamers that run from that place. He is at the head of a large manufacturing establishment and a very rich man."

Silas would carry out his resolution!

He wrote a very pathetic letter to Steve, telling him how his father felt, and of his failings.

Not many days after Silas might have been seen hurrying through the village to the hillside where lived "old Jake." He had in his hand a letter postmarked "Seattle, Wash."

"Hello, Jake! As I had nothing ter do ter-night, I thought I may as well bring the mail up ter you—only one letter."

"Much obliged. Who's bin writing to me, I wonder. Seems to be quite lengthy."

The aged man was quiet for a minute or two, and then cried out, in a loud voice:

"My God! My God! It is from Steve! He forgives me, and wants me to come to him. I will! I will!"

A few days after Jake might have been seen on a fast express going toward Seattle. Such excitement proved too much for him. On the latter part of his journey he became delirious. On arriving at his son's, his condition became somewhat better, and he found himself in one of the best homes of the city. His son had become very rich. He had married the one he loved, and had two loving children. Jake received a hearty welcome, and an invitation to spend the remainder of his days there. This high living was too much for him, and in about two months he passed quietly away, feeling forgiven for the wrong he had done, and happy at seeing his son once more.

Steve Spencer continued to prosper, and is now one of the rich and influential business men of Seattle.

Old Zion's Clever Ruse.

(By Henry Roth, New York City.)

"Is everything ready, here?"

The above was said by a middle-aged man with a stern face and a tight-fitting frock coat. His companions were stylishly dressed, and young in appearance.

"Remember," he said, "if I blow three times, you are to come and pull up the window."

The young men proceeded to go in the direction of the river, but stopped in front of a small hut. Crouching in front of the barred window, they patiently waited for any coming event.

James Zionwall, or "Old Zion," as he was familiarly known by almost everybody in Chicago, waited until his assistants were out of sight, and then he also walked in the same direction. Stopping in front of the hut, he knocked for admittance. Receiving no answer he knocked again, this time a gruff voice said:

"Who is there?"

"A friend," replied Old Zion.

"Give the countersign," said the gruff voice.

"Death to Old Zion."

"All right," and opening the door, he let Old Zion in. It was too dark in the hall to distinguish a face, so the men did not recognize the famous detective.

They marched in the dark until the gruff voice—we do not know the man's name, so let us call him gruff voice—said:

"Stop right an here, pard."

Without hesitating, Old Zion stopped where he was told, and immediately they shot downward. When they reached the bottom, the gruff voice said:

"This is the last passage we go through, and then we're there."

Old Zion heard voices, but he said nothing until the end of the passage was reached, when the gruff voice gave a low whistle. It was answered, and then a door swung open. A minute later they were in an ill-smelling room, with one window, upon which stood a small lamp. Around a table men were seated, playing cards, and when Old Zion made his appearance, they looked up and said:

"Welcome back, Bill," and one of them got up to shake hands with the detective. The minute their eyes met, the men started back in surprise.

"Comrades," he said, "we've been duped, and this person is Old Zion, the detective."

The name of "Old Zion" caused a panic among the wharf rats. The coolest of these toughs approached Old Zion, and said:

"I suppose you think you're going to leave this place alive?"

"I certainly do, Brad Smith, and you're coming with me."

"Well," said Brad, "I like your nerve, but you might as well start right in and tell us what you came for."

"With pleasure," said Old Zion.

"Now, to begin with, I suppose you've heard about the missing papers of John Gunner. Well, those papers are worth millions to his heir, who happens to be a distant cousin. Many detectives have been sent to find them, but all efforts have failed. I happen to know that these same mysterious papers are in this house to-night, and I'm here to get them."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Brad, "so that's your little game?"

"Well, all I can tell you is to go find them."

"Then you refuse to give them up?" said Old Zion.

"Bet your life," replied Brad.

"Then take the consequences," and seizing a chair, Old Zion smashed the lamp.

The room was in utter darkness, save for the light of Old Zion's cigar, which he quickly laid on the window sill in order to mislead them.

"There he goes," cried the toughs, "he's making for the window."

While confusion reigned, Brad quickly struck a match and lit a candle. Old Zion was just going through the door with a package in his hand, and turning, he said:

"That cigar trick fooled you all, didn't it. Just look on the window sill, and you'll see it's there still."

Quickly taking the key from the door, he locked it from the outside, and running to the end of the passage, he blew his whistle three times.

There was a slight stir from above, and then he felt himself being drawn upward. When he reached the top, he found his assistants waiting for him.

Telling them to go for the police, he remained outside to see that no one escaped. When the police arrived, a raid was made, in which Brad and his gang were all captured.

The next morning in court Old Zion told how he had found the papers under a mat, and why he had long suspected this gang. The rightful owner soon claimed the papers, and one of the most difficult mysteries of the century was brought to an end.

Dan's Reward.

(By Clyde Hollison, Columbus, O.)

One dark night in October, 1899, as Dan Martin was walking along the country road, he heard a stifled cry. He stopped and listened. It was repeated. It seemed to come from the little white house beyond the clump of trees. He started to run toward the house, which soon came into view. Dan ran into the kitchen, but could see nothing. So he ran on upstairs. He heard a low moan, which appeared to come from the closet. Dan opened the door and found a girl bound, gagged. He whipped out his knife and cut the

ropes which held the girl. Dan then proceeded to question her. She said that she and her mother were eating supper when two ruffians rushed in and seized them. "They tied and bore my mother off with them. I do not know where."

Dan listened very attentively. After this he proceeded to hunt a clew.

He found footprints, which led over the road and through the woods. Dan very soon came to an old log house, from which shone a light. He looked through the window and saw two men drinking and playing cards. In the other end of the room sat a woman with her hands tied behind her back. Dan guessed that they were the ones he was in search of. "I must capture those fellows and arrest them," he thought. He looked to see if his revolvers were in working order. Then he opened the door softly and stepped in. "Surrender!" he cried, pointing his revolvers straight at the ruffians. "Curse it, who are you?" roared the ruffians. "I am a detective," quietly said Dan. He coolly stepped forward and snapped the handcuffs on them.

It so happened that these men were escaped convicts, for whose capture $1,000 reward was offered. And Dan Martin got it.

The Great Robbery Mystery.

(By Clarence Daniels, Savannah, Ga.)

In a wholesale store at the corner of Barnard and Bay Streets, Savannah, Ga., it was found one morning that the safe was robbed of twenty dollars, and paper valued at seven hundred and fifty dollars.

There was not any kind of dynamite, nor safe-cracking tools used. When the proprietor came to business the next day after the robbery, he found the safe locked and everything in perfect order.

He began at once questioning his employees, but could not find any trace of the missing money nor the papers.

He then placed the matter in the hands of the police, but to no avail.

He offered a reward for the thief, but still the officers could do nothing.

At last a young detective visited the city, and was told by some of his friends about the case, and the reward.

"Never mind the reward," said he, "let's hear the case," and he questioned them thoroughly.

He then went to the proprietor, and after being satisfied with all he (the proprietor) knew, he went away.

Fifteen minutes later an Irishman started up Broughton Street, toward Bill Wilkins' saloon. He went to the back part of the place where two fellows sat talking. Seating himself at a nearby table, he appeared to be sleepy.

Ordering a glass of beer, he laid his head on his hands and went to sleep.

"Who's that guy?" said the larger of the two men.

"Don't know, cap; but I guess he is an old Irish tramp."

The Irishman was conscious of some one approaching him. Raising his head a little, he saw the small man was in the act of leaving the place, and had to pass him.

He went into an adjoining room. When he returned, the other was gone; but he was no more an Irishman, but a regular uptown tough.

He ran out of the place, and found the two men making off at a rapid gait. Instantly he shadowed them to a house on Thirty-eighth and Jefferson Streets.

Why he shadowed the men was because he heard them talking about being careful of the police, and when he sat near them, they were afraid he was a detective, and lastly, of their funny exit from the saloon.

Now, getting a number of officers dressed in citizens' clothes, he raided the house. Two went in the back, and one at each side of the house to guard against the escape of the crooks. The young detective and an officer went in the front. The lock was picked and the door pushed open. In rushed the two officers. The house was made up of one large room or hall, and a dozen crooks sat around drinking and talking. They started up to fight, but the other two officers had affected an entrance, so they were looking into eight revolvers. One of the officers put the handcuffs on three of the prisoners, when the lamps were extinguished.

The officers fired, but with no effect. There was a rush of feet, and all was quiet.

The three men were marched off to prison, and were made to confess.

They told of the trapdoor, where the crooks had escaped, and the tunnel, which led from that house to a house on Thirty-seventh Street. They even told how the lock of the safe was picked and where the money went.

The detective recovered the papers, but the money he could not. He made a second trip to both houses, but they were deserted, and so was the tunnel.

At last he caught the crooks at a saloon on Congress Street, and each received a long sentence.

The detective received his reward, and felt happy over his little adventure in Savannah, Ga.

The Mystery of Pocket Island.

(By George Roberts, Harrisburg, Pa.)

In the year 185—, a Polish Jew peddler named Wolf and a roving Micmac Indian met at a small village on Annapolis Bay, in Nova Scotia, and there and then formed a partnership. The Jew had a little money, and what was of more value, brains and audacity. He knew the risks as well as the profit to be obtained in smuggling liquor. Rum was cheap in Nova Scotia and dear in Maine. The Indian owned a sloop; so, with the sloop and the Jew's money and cunning on the basis of "share and share alike," they joined their fortunes. Capt. Wolf and the *Sea Fox*, as the sloop was named, with the Indian and his dog for crew, began their career. There were along the coast of Maine many uninhabited islands, seldom visited either by people, fishermen or coasters, who gave them a wide berth. One of these islands is named Pocket Island. It was said to be haunted. Occasionally a shipwreck occurred here.

In 1842 the British bark *Lancaster* was driven on this island in a winter night's snowstorm, and all hands perished. Five of the crew were washed ashore alive, only to freeze to death among the snow-covered rocks.

The wreck was only discovered two years after by a stray fisherman, who suddenly came upon the bleaching bones and grinning skulls of those unfortunate sailors. The island was said to be haunted. During a night storm a tall man had been seen, by a flash of lightning, standing on a high cliff. Strange sounds, like the cries of dying men, had been heard. When the waves were high a noise like a bellowing bull could be heard. Such a spot was Pocket Island. In this island was a cave in which nature had placed a rocking stone, and so fixed that the least touch of the hand in a particular point would move it easily. When so moved, a little niche in the rocky wall was exposed. Wolf had discovered the cave and its rocking stone, and utilized it as a hiding place for his money. Wolf even did more, for he cheated the Indian out of a great deal of money because the Indian could not read or write, and had no idea of figures. The Indian at last grew suspicious, and watched Wolf. One day the climax came. Wolf had gone into his retreat thinking he was not followed, but he was followed by the Indian. The cave was so situated that at the rising of the tide the water fills up the entrance, but cannot get into the cave. Wolf lighted a lamp and sat down. When the sea had closed the entrance, no sound entered. Wolf waited until ten, twenty, thirty minutes had passed. He then believed himself alone. He went to the rocking stone, pushed it back, took from the niche, one by one, the bags of coin. These he carried to the table and emptied their contents into a glittering pile. From behind a rock a pair of sinister eyes watched him. As he counted, a tall, swarthy form crept noiselessly toward him. As he was gloating over his wealth, suddenly two cold, massive hands closed around his throat, and as he writhed and twisted, his hand caught the handle of his pistol in his belt. The next instant it was drawn and fired full against the Indian's breast. Then a shriek of death agony as his swarthy foe leaped upward against the rocky shelf and knocked over the two burning lamps. A crash of breaking glass, a flash of fierce flame bursting into red billows. Outside could be heard the bellowing of a bull. Three years after, a young man shipwrecked on the island found the charred bodies of the Jew and the Indian, also the pile of blackened money on the table.

John.

(By Charles Boris, Philadelphia, Pa.)

The week entered, and with its coming came very mysterious things. The people of the small town of Rhen had enough gossip to last them a month. In their richest home, occupied by Mr. Raymen and his family, was where most mysterious things happened.

On Monday night there was heard a great moaning and lamenting, which lasted throughout the night, and for the whole week.

Mr. Raymen, on being questioned, looked surprised, but said nothing. His wife said that she did not hear a thing. The week passed, and on the next week all these things stopped, but fruits, bread and gay candies began to disappear from the house. Some of the townspeople said that every night they saw something white in the pantry.

But the greatest surprise of all was when, on the thirteenth day from the beginning of all these mysterious events, John, the only son and heir, did not come down to breakfast. His father went up, saw that the bed had been occupied, but still John was missing.

Mr. Raymen was alarmed and immediately sent for Mr. Carter, who was in the country near by taking a rest. When Mr. Carter arrived at Rhen he was given a welcoming cheer, for all had heard of his wonderful experiences. When he arrived at Mr. Raymen's house he went to John's room. At a glance he saw that John had not disappeared from the house, for there at the foot of the bed lay all his clothes; nor were any missing from his closet. Night came, and Mr. Carter hid in the pantry, for he thought John was surely only playing one of his pranks. Mr. Raymen stood at the door with a well-developed whip in his hands.

The clock struck one.

"Thirteen o'clock is time for the clock to be fixed," thought Mr. Carter.

At that instant a figure dressed in a white dressing gown stood in the center of the pantry.

In a minute it disappeared. Mr. Carter rubbed his eyes.

What! Was it possible! Things were disappearing from the shelves. Mr. Carter rushed forward. As he did so he received a smack from nowhere, as it seemed.

The next minute all was still.

Mr. Raymen had run in horror, but Mr. Carter picked himself up and went out.

The next day he examined John's laboratory and library. As he stood before the case of books, he espied a small red book. He took it down and saw by the finger marks that it had been used recently. He opened the book, and on the very first page he came to the key of the whole affair. The title of the book was:

"The adventures of a————"

Mr. Carter looked again, then smiled. The next night he hid in John's bed, covered over by the covers.

The same time as the night before he heard a scraping, and before he knew it the covers had been pulled off by what seemed a human hand. All was dark, but Mr. Carter kept quiet.

Soon there was a shuffling, and he saw a pair of naked feet. Quick as a wink he tackled those feet, and then something fell. There lay what seemed a body, half being shown covered by the same robe he saw the night before.

He jumped up, touched a button, and the electric light lit up.

The noise had awakened the whole house, and all came up, even the black cat.

Mr. Carter raised the half body, whereat it disappeared, but by pulling off the ———— the body of John covered by a dressing gown stood before them.

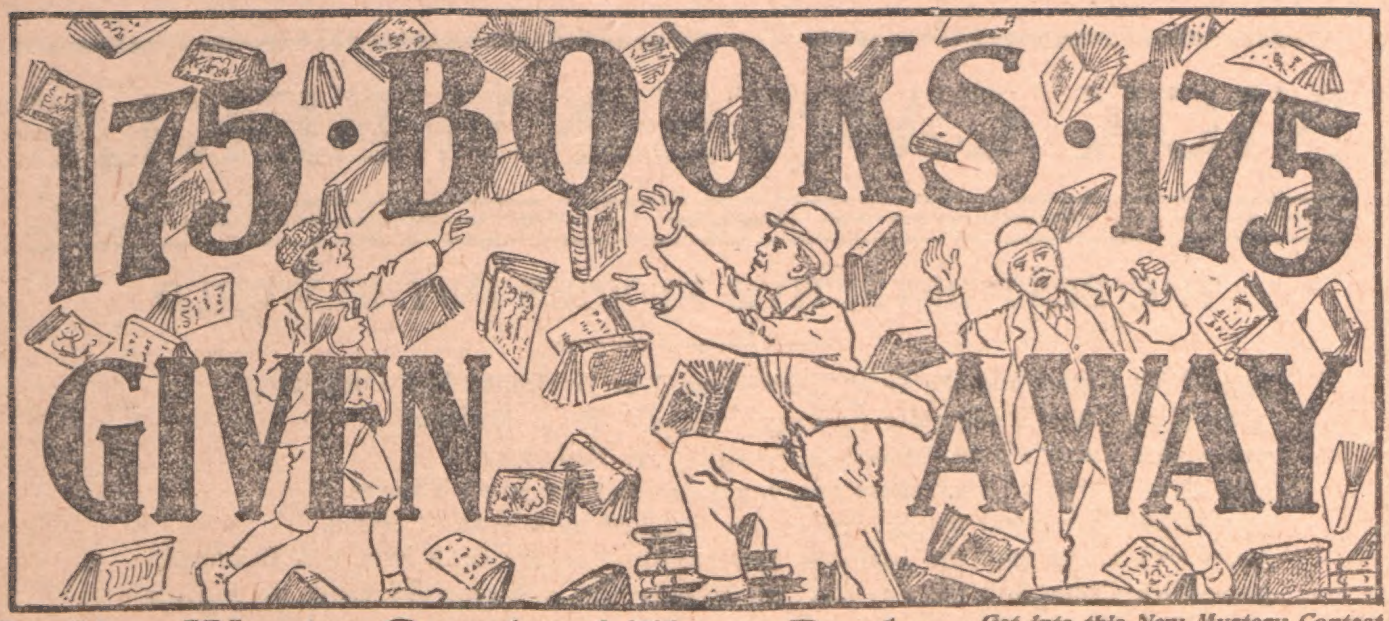
John rubbed his eyes, and all at once said:

"The book I read was fine."

"What book?" asked Mr. Carter.

"'Nick Carter,' of course."

P. S.—The mystery may be told in a few words. John was a somnambulist, and had done all these deeds in his sleep. The disappearance was done by a black robe which he had put on one of his white ones. It is rather peculiar that such things happen, even leading to crimes in our sleep, but it is nevertheless true.



Do You Want a Couple of These Books; Or Three, or Five, or Perhaps TEN?...

Get into this New Mystery Contest, if You Do! Here is a list of the Books, from which you may choose if you win a Prize : : : : : :

FIVE FIRST PRIZES!

The five boys who send in the five best stories will each receive Ten Books from this list. :: ::

TEN SECOND PRIZES!

The ten boys who send in the next best stories will each receive any Four Books they may select in this list :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: ::

FIFTEEN THIRD PRIZES!

The fifteen boys who send in the next best stories will each receive any Three Books they may select in this list. :: :: :: :: :: :: ::

TWENTY OTHER PRIZES!

The twenty boys who send in the next best stories will each receive any Two Books they may select in this list :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: :: ::

58—Gilbert, the Trapper.....By Captain C. B. Ashley
59—The Rajah's Fortress.....By William Murray Graydon
60—The Mountain Cave.....By George H .Coomer
61—The Erie Train Boy.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
62—How He Won.....By Brooks McCormick
63—In the Sunk Lands.....By Walter F. Burns
64—The Tour of a Private Car.....By Matthew White, Jr.
65—That Treasure.....By Frank H. Converse
66—A Young Vagabond.....By Z. R. Bennett
67—Tom Brown's School Days.....By Thomas Hughes
68—Smuggler's Cave.....By Annie Ashmore
69—Pirate Island.....By Harry Collingwood
70—The New and Amusing History of Sandford and Merton, By F. C. Burnand
71—Mark Seaworth's Voyage on the Indian Ocean, By William H. G. Kingston
72—The Way to Success; or, Tom Randall.....By Alfred Oldfellow
73—The Wolf Boy of China.....By William Dalton
74—The Dingo Boys.....By George Manville Fenn
75—The Boys in the Forecastle.....By George H. Coomer
76—The War Tiger—A Tale of the Conquest of China, By William Dalton
77—Perils of the Jungle.....By Edward S. Ellis
78—Both Sides of the Continent.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
79—The Rival Battalions.....By Brooks McCormick
80—Afloat in the Forest.....By Captain Mayne Reid
81—Arthur Helmuth of the H. & N. C. Railway..By Edward S. Ellis
82—The Young Editor.....By Matthew White, Jr.
83—The Tiger Prince.....By William Dalton
84—The Butcher of Cawnpore.....By William Murray Graydon
85—Facing Death.....By G. A. Henty
86—Catmur's Cave.....By Richard Dowling
87—The Five-Hundred-Dollar Check.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
88—My Mysterious Fortune.....By Matthew White, Jr.
89—Clinton; or, Boy Life in the Country.....By Walter Aimwell
90—Out on the Pampas.....By G. A. Henty
91—The Crusoes of Guiana.....By Louis Boussenard
92—Specter Gold.....By Headon Hill
93—A New York Boy.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
94—Oscar; or, The Boy Who Had His Own Way..By Walter Aimwell
95—By Sheer Pluck.....By G. A. Henty
96—An Unprovoked Mutiny.....By James Otis
97—The Giant Islanders.....By Brooks McCormick
98—The Grand Chaco.....By George Manville Fenn
99—The Cruise of the Restless; or, On Inland Waterways, By James Otis
100—Maori and Settler.....By G. A. Henty
101—The Lone Ranch.....By Captain Mayne Reid
102—Clearing His Name.....By Matthew White, Jr.
103—The Adventures of Rex Staunton.....By Mary A. Denison
104—Heir to a Million.....By Frank H. Converse
105—The Young Actor.....By Gayle Winterton
106—The Boy Knight.....By G. A. Henty
107—Van; or, In Search of an Unknown Race..By Frank H. Converse
108—Texar's Revenge.....By Jules Verne
109—A Dash to the Pole.....By Herbert D. Ward
110—Around the World in Eighty Days.....By Jules Verne
111—The Midshipman, Marmaduke Merry....By Wm. H. G. Kingston
112—Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.....By Jules Verne
113—The Bravest of the Brave.....By G. A. Henty
114—The Old Man of the Mountains.....By Geo. H. Coomer
115—Adventures of an Athlete.....By Matthew White, Jr.
116—Happy-Go-Lucky Jack.....By Frank H. Converse
117—James Braithwaite, the Supercargo...By William H. G. Kingston
118—Ned Newton; or, The Fortunes of a New York Bootblack, By Horatio Alger, Jr.
119—A Final Reckoning.....By G. A. Henty
120—In the Wilds of New Mexico.....By G. Manville Fenn
121—Peter Trawl.....By Wm. H. G. Kingston
122—Tom Brace.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
123—The Giraffe Hunters.....By Capt. Mayne Reid
124—St. George for England.....By G. A. Henty

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS

This contest will close Oct. 1st. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name. To become a contestant for these prizes, you must cut out the Prize Contest Coupon printed herewith, fill it out properly, and mail it to NICK CARTER WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it

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318—Nick Carter's Quick Guess; or, Ida Jones and the Jewel Thieves.
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320—Nick Carter and the Diamond Star; or, Placing the Guilt Where it Belonged.
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324—Nick Carter and the Stolen Duchess; or, The Quick Work of One Night.
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335—Nick Carter's False Clew; or, Playing the Dupe for Big Game.
336—Nick Carter's Drag Net; or, Forcing the Hands of the Secret Six.
337—Nick Carter's Death Photo; or, Revealed by a Camera.
338—Nick Carter and the Will Forgers; or, Playing for a Fortune.
339—Nick Carter and the Living Mask; or, Murdered Without a Mark.
340—Nick Carter's Night Watch; or, Working in the Dark.
341—Nick Carter's Chemical Test; or, Animal Blood or Human?
342—Nick Carter Within an Inch of His Life; or, The Mystery of the Pretty Typewriter.
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